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"A TALL FORM WAS SEEN BETWEEN THEM AND THE BLAZE.—Page 45.

# THE

# WILDERNESS FUGITIVES

BY

EDWARD S. ELLIS

AUTHOR OF "DEERFOOT" SERIES, "LOG CABIN" SERIES, "BOY PIONEER" SERIES, ETC

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# THE WILDERNESS FUGITIVES.

## CHAPTER I.

### ALONE AND TOGETHER.

THE reader will recall that at the close of The River Fugitives the narrative left our friends in a situation, apparently, of safety; and the belief, on the part of Jo Minturn, his sister Rosa and Ned Clinton, was strong that, in their flight from the dreadful scenes of the Wyoming massacre of July, 1778, they had left all dangers behind. They were confident that, under the guidance of the matchless Mohawk, Lena-Wingo (temporarily absent in quest of food), the road to security was beset by no perils worth the mention.

But, as has also been intimated, they were altogether wrong in this belief. Brother and sister and Ned Clinton were seated near each other on a fallen tree, and it was not yet fully dark when the soft tread of a moccasin was heard on the leaves, and they saw the tall, slim figure of the Mohawk

come forth like some spirit of the forest to ask them their business in thus invading his domains. The supposition was so general that he had gone in quest of food, that a common instinct led them to look to see whether he brought anything of that nature with him. There was enough light left to show that he carried nothing but his gun.

"Well, Jack," said Ned, "we thought you had gone out foraging, but if you did, you didn't make much success of it."

"Lena-Wingo didn't hunt eat—he hunt something more."

"Well, did he find it?" asked Rosa, who was more daring in her questions than the others thought it prudent to be.

"Yes—he find him."

"Why don't you bring him here, then, that we may see him?"

"He gone," was the direct but rather unsatisfactory answer, for there was no telling to what he referred.

Rosa was on the point of questioning him further, when it struck her that if he desired them to know what he had been doing he would tell them only when he chose. And so she forbore.

"I hope the result was pleasing to you," ventured Ned Clinton, on what seemed forbidden ground.

"When Lena-Wingo look for Iroquois in canoe, he take knife along."

As this remark was clearly intended in the light of a joke, all felt the duty of laughing at it, although the mirthful inclination was not very tremendous, coming from such a grim source.

"Jo," added the redskin, after waiting for the applause to wear itself out, "want to see you."

The young man thus appealed to sprang to his feet, and placed himself beside the red scout, wondering what he could have to say that he should keep from the rest. Ned and Rosa saw them talking together for a minute or two, when they turned, as if to walk deeper into the woods. At that moment, Jo looked around and called to them in a cautious voice, just loud enough to be heard:

"We won't be back for some time."

This was a curious proceeding, indeed; but there was no use of protesting against it. The Mohawk had a way of doing as he pleased about such matters, and it was useless to interfere. When they had been gone several minutes, it

struck Ned that, as they would not be back for awhile, he was given a chance to converse with Rosa, such as had not been his since the invasion of the Wyoming valley.

The consciousness came upon him so suddenly that he was not a little confused by the problem of how he was to improve the opportunity. True, he had spent many hours in the company of the beautiful girl, but it seemed to him that never had he felt as he did then. He was sure that she must be aware of the unutterably tender affection he held toward her—a feeling that had grown within the last few days, until it took possession of his being. Not until the life of Rosa Minturn was placed in peril did he comprehend how much he loved her. When there was reason to fear she was in the hands of the Iroquois or the Tory colonel, and that he might never see her more, then it was that it seemed his heart must break from grief alone. And when, a short time after, she was found without a hair of her head injured, his joy was correspondingly great—so great, indeed, that he was sure all noticed it, even Rosa herself.

The couple were seated upon a fallen tree, there being some two or three feet of space between them. The twilight, which was fairly upon forest

and stream, threw the faces of both in shadow, and Ned was glad of it. If there was one thing in the world of which he was absolutely certain, it was that he was never so ill at ease as he was at that moment, it following, as a matter of course, that Rosa could not but be aware of it, and that she looked upon him with pity and contempt. She was wonderfully kind, it seemed to him, and so far as he could judge, showed no consciousness of the pitiful exhibition he was making of himself.

"When we once arrive at Wilkesbarre, and you are safe from the Indians and Tories, I suppose Jack will hasten back to your parents with the tidings, for it will be a great relief to them."

"He has n't said anything to me about it, but it will be just like him, for he is never content with anything except danger and action."

"It would have gone hard with you if you had had any one besides him to lead you through the woods."

"None is so capable as he when he chooses to exert himself; but I think he has been a little careless. There was no need of his being caught as he was in that house when you went to his rescue."

Although it was too dark for it to be seen, yet a crimson flush overspread the face of the young scout again at receiving such a compliment from those fair lips. He checked the protest that rose to his own with the remembrance of the reproof of Jo, fearing that he might appear to assume a modesty that he did not feel.

"Where one has done so much for us as the Mohawk, it would be ungrateful not to give him what assistance I could. I was as much pleased as was he that I was able to divert the attention of the Iroquois until he found a chance to get away. But, Rosa, you know as well as I that they could not have held him there, for he has been in many a worse situation than that."

"That may all be true, Edward, but you do wrong to throw aside all the credit, as you seem anxious to do. You acted bravely, and you know it. Jo has told me about it, and he said more than that, too!"

"I don't know what he could say more than that," said young Clinton in surprise.

"He told me that you had a dreadful time in getting away from the battle. You had to swim the river out to Monacacy island, and the Indians followed you, and came near capturing both.

You acted very bravely again, as any one who knows you might have been sure you would, and helped him very much, indeed. I thank you for that, Edward."

"I don't want to appear in the light of disputant of all that Jo says, but he gives me more credit in that matter than belongs to me. It was all we could do, and more than appeared possible, to take care of ourselves—each of us alone, without thinking of the other. He surely helped me as much as I helped him."

"Well, I shall have to wait till I hear what he has to say about that," responded Rosa, with that persistency so charming in a beautiful woman when it is in favor of him with whom she is holding her argument.

The certainty that he possessed the good opinion of this girl, in spite of his own sense of awkwardness and embarrassment, caused more than one thrill of delight to pass through the young hero as he listened to the words—a thousand times more delightful—coming from such lips as hers.

"I am pleased beyond measure," he said, gathering courage from her utterances, and the darkness that now veiled their faces from each other,

"to find that I have earned your good opinion, and all that I ask is that I may continue to deserve it."

"Why, of course you will," she was prompt to reply. "What could you do to make *any* one respect you less?"

"Well, I might do a great many things that I hope I won't do," he laughed. "Not to mention my own principles, the fear of displeasing you would be enough at any time—"

"'Sh!" interrupted Rosa, in a frightened whisper. "I am sure I heard some one just then behind us."

## CHAPTER II.

### SOFT AND LOW.

At the mention of suspected danger, Clinton sprang up and moved in the direction whence he supposed it came, though he heard nothing of it himself. It was so dark that he could see but a little way in the woods. After stealing a few paces, rifle in hand, he paused and listened, thinking that if any enemies were at hand, they would be sure to betray themselves by attempting to advance. But the stillness remained unbroken, and he suspected that Rosa had been mistaken. Even though he knew not where Jo and the Mohawk were just then, he was sure that they were at no great distance, and the redskin was certain to discover the approach of any foe. When five or ten minutes passed he turned about and rejoined his fair friend.

"You must have been in error," said he.

"I *was* mistaken," she said, with a laugh; "and I was on the point of calling and telling you what it was."

"Well, what was it?"

"Lena-Wingo; he was here a minute ago, and said he had come to see if all was right, after which he went back to where Jo is waiting for him."

"How long before they will be here again?"

"Not very long," said Rosa. "He told me they were not quite ready to start, but would be shortly; he made a little noise when he was coming, so as to let us know he was near!"

"And I didn't hear him. If it hadn't been for you, he would have come right upon us."

Ned sat down on the fallen tree beside Rosa. Somehow or other, the space between the two was reduced almost to no space at all. It may have been that the young scout was so absent-minded, that he forgot about the respectable gap that existed a short time before. But be that as it may, Rosa herself was so absent-minded, also, that she forgot to remind him of it. So they sat, so near that they could afford to understand each other without speaking above a whisper.

Having resumed his seat, Ned sat a while trying to think of something appropriate to say, but it seemed that all his ideas were scattered to the winds. When that interruption broke in upon

them, he flattered himself that he was getting along very well—that is, for him—but now—why, he was never so put to it in all his life. If the innocent cause of all this misery had not come to his relief, there is no telling how long the oppressive silence would have lasted. But Rosa was merciful, or else she became tired of waiting.

"Edward," said she, in that low, winning voice that was hers alone, "when Colonel Butler and his Tories and Indians leave the valley, what are you going to do?"

"Whatever seems the best for our country. I cannot exactly say what that will be, but I have thought I would join the Continental Army under Washington. I so love and revere that great man, that I can fight better if near him, where I can see his face and hear his voice now and then."

"I have often thought the same thing myself, but I have never seen him. Lena-Wingo told me that he has spoken to him many times, and he looks upon him as if he were some one sent by the Great Spirit to save our country."

"He means Heaven when he speaks of the Great Spirit, and he is right; for he is the man of all others to carry the colonies to their independence."

"Have you ever seen Washington?"

"No. That great pleasure is before me. But I have talked with many who have, and they have raised my eagerness to the highest point. "But," he added, more thoughtfully, "it would not be right for me to go to his army and enlist just to fight under him, when I may be needed somewhere else!"

"You cannot go anywhere that you will not be needed," said Rosa, in the same thoughtful voice. "There are too many Tories and Britons, and too few patriots, in this country. If ever I wished that I was a man it is now, that I might shoulder a musket, and help fight the battles of my country."

"That you cannot do, of course, but you can encourage all who are at home and able to bear a hand to do so; if I were the greatest coward that ever lived, your words would drive me into the army, for it would take more courage to brave them than to face the cannon's mouth, or cross bayonets with the British regulars."

"You seem to place great value on my counsel, Edward."

"So I do; I would rather die than displease you in anything."

These fervent words were uttered in a low, earnest tone, that Ned would not have dared to use a few minutes before, when he first took his seat so close to the idol of his heart. As was perhaps natural, it was the girl who seemed never to lose her self-command, and who parried every attempt to broach the subject that was evidently clamoring for utterance in the heart of the youth.

"Well, if you value my opinion so highly," she answered, in that half-frivolous and half-serious tone that was especially tantalizing to one of his ardent temperament, "I shall be very careful of the advice I give."

"You could n't advise me to do anything except that which is best for myself and country."

"I can reply as you did a moment ago—that I could easily do so, but I have no intention of trying it. Jo tells me that you and he are to go together?"

"Of course we shall. We have been friends all our lives, and we may as well stick together in the army."

"I am glad to hear that, for it has many advantages—but why talk of those things now?"

The girl looked around in the darkness, as if she

wondered at the continued absence of Lena Wingo and her brother.

"I am half tempted to lose my patience with Jack!" she said, after a minute of waiting and listening. "He doesn't seem to be in a hurry at all; we ought to have been in Wilkesbarre before daylight this morning, and here it is dark again, and there is no telling when he will be ready to start."

"I have no fear of the Mohawk," replied Ned, who thought they might find a much more interesting subject to talk about. "He will be here in due time, and is sure to do his part in whatever needs to be done. I think he has gone in search of that supply of food he was talking about a while ago. When he gets it he will bring us a good supper, which will not come amiss to any of us, although I should have preferred to eat it in Wilkesbarre."

"We may as well content ourselves here until Jack is ready," said Ned, keeping his seat as close to Rosa as he conveniently could. "Until then, remember that I am here, ready to defend you with my life."

"I know you would, Edward," she responded in a softer, tenderer voice than the last few words

had been spoken. "But I do not want to see the occasion come."

"I should welcome it, Rosa, to prove my devotion to you."

"I need no proof," she answered, speaking so low that he barely caught the words.

"How happy your words have made me! Hello! here comes some one at last!"

## CHAPTER III.

### EAVESDROPPING.

BOTH supposed that they heard the footsteps of Lena-Wingo and Jo Minturn; but a habit taught by the hard experience of the last few days caused them to cease speaking and to listen. Only a second was needed to tell them that strangers were approaching them, although, fortunately they were not heading in a direct line for the place where the lovers were sitting. Had it been otherwise, it is hard to see how they could have escaped observation. The men were issuing from the wood and making for the shore of the river, aiming at a point a few yards above where Ned and Rosa were stationed. They were walking at a leisurely gait, evidently with no suspicion that any white persons were within earshot. Judging from the sound of feet upon the leaves, a half dozen persons were proceeding without any caution at all, talking as freely as if together at their own homes.

The feelings of Rosa Minturn, when she recognized the voice of the Tory colonel, Butler, may be imagined. He was accompanied by another white man, probably one of his officers, and several Indians, and he was talking more freely. In the stillness of the summer night, while they were so close at hand, it was as easy to distinguish every word uttered as if the speech was intended for the ears of the eavesdroppers.

"We have heard so much of the smartness of that Mohawk scout that I began to think there was something in him," said the principal member of the party, Rosa identifying him as the detested Butler. "But I have never seen anything myself that showed up very well on his part. Here he is on this side of the Susquehanna, when he ought to have been at Wilkesbarre before daylight this morning."

"We ought to have been there before that time, even," replied his companion. "I am sure we could have played the deuce with that place, a confounded sight better than with Wyoming, for they were so scared that they were on the run and that's just the time to strike, you know, colonel."

"Yes; we might have done something if we had gone over at once, but it was some time before we learned what was going on."

"I hear they are not much better yet, and it seems to me that it is not too late to slip our men across and clean 'em out."

But Colonel Butler was too wily to consent to any such project, although there was reason to believe that it might have succeeded, even though deferred till that rather late hour.

"It isn't worth our while. There's only one more of the rebels that I want to lay hands on. Let me get that one and the rest may go."

"I think I know who it is, colonel."

"No doubt you do," was the prompt reply. "Any one who has heard me speak within the last twenty-four hours has found it out. I tell you, captain, that you don't often see as pretty a rebel as that young Minturn. She slipped off last night because she found I admired her so much that I couldn't keep my eyes from her."

"You're right there, colonel, when you speak of her beauty, for I have never seen one that could surpass her; I wonder that she don't turn the heads of all she meets. Perhaps she does, though,

and, if you hadn't foreclosed there, I would be tempted to make a claim myself."

"It will be dangerous for any man to interfere with me."

The individual whom he addressed as a captain was heard to laugh at the words of his superior officer, and he replied:

"I am sure there is no fear of my trying to intrude myself in that direction, for I am opposed to the thing on principle."

"I am aware of that," replied the colonel, the party having halted on the edge of the river, as if awaiting the coming of someone. "Of course I had no reference to *you* when I spoke, but I feel especially angry toward Red Jack, or Lena-Wingo, and I will give a good deal for his scalp. He has played the mischief with our plans more than once, and now, when everything is going along just as I want it to, he comes in and walks off with the prize."

"But don't you suppose he was set up to do it?"

"Certainly; and Colonel Denison was the man who put it into his head. I can see it all now, though I didn't suspect it at the time."

"Why don't you shoot him?"

"I was mad enough to do that; and I believe that if I had met him last night, after the Mohawk escaped so narrowly being cut through by my sword, I would have done it. But I have thought the matter over to-day, and made up my mind that it won't pay. There have already been some things about this Wyoming business that will make trouble. The Indians ought to have killed every rebel that was n't shot down in battle; but they let so many get away that they will tell all sorts of stories about us, and when they get to England, they may interfere with some little plans of my own."*

"Well, if you catch the bird that flew away, you can afford to forgive the well-intended schemes; for when she is once in your hands, what care you for others? You tell me, colonel, that the Mohawk did not reach Wilkesbarre with her to-day?"

"No. I had word from there at sunset, and they had not been seen anywhere in the neighborhood; and, as the Mohawk was observed on this side of the stream near noon to-day, he must still be here."

"It has been dark quite awhile, and he may have slipped across since the sun went down."

*After the Revolution, Colonel Butler tried hard to obtain the honor of knighthood from the King of Great Britain, but failed.

"He may, it is true, but it is hardly likely, for the redskins, as a rule, don't like to do their work until the latter part of the night. People are too apt to be wide awake in the earlier portion of the evening; and I am quite sure Red Jack will wait till beyond midnight before he makes a move in the business."

"The night promises to be dark, so that when he undertakes to paddle to the other shore, he will be pretty apt to do it."

"It isn't likely we could hinder him, if he was on the watch, as I suppose he will be," growled Butler, reluctant to concede to the redskin the skill and prowess that he knew properly belonged to him. "But I have figured on the supposition that he will get safely across with the girl, so it won't make much difference whether he does set foot on the other shore or not. If he *does* get there, though, he will find there is more than one lion in the path between him and Wilkesbarre. I have some of the best runners and scouts of the Iroquois on the hunt for the couple, and it is scarcely possible that they can fail. I go across myself, so as to be ready to take charge of matters the minute a competent guiding hand is needed."

"And you want me to go with you?"

"You may as well, for matters are dull behind us, and are likely to stay so for the few days that we shall yet remain. Come along with us, Captain Bagley, and you will be likely to see some sport before you get back."

"That reminds me," said the officer, whose name was just spoken, "that I heard somewhere from some one that this pretty rebel has an ardent admirer and lover in the person of a young soldier of Denison's forces, and that he and a brother of the girl fought like the very deuce in the battle—"

"And was killed?" struck in the Tory, with an eagerness that showed how intense was his hate for the one who dared to love with a pure and holy affection her whom he had selected as the object of his sinful admiration.

"I am sorry to say I cannot give you that information," said the captain, with a half-laugh at the colonel's eagerness. "Both young men, I have been told, managed to get through the battle without a scratch, and are probably somewhere in the valley at this moment—perhaps trying to help the young lady to get to Wilkesbarre."

Colonel Butler broke in with an imprecation, as

he recalled the accounts he had received of the affair at the settler's house that same day, and which left no doubt in his mind that the two young rebels referred to were acting in concert with the Mohawk scout, Lena-Wingo.

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE COURSE OF TRUE LOVE.

Rosa and Ned, without wish or intention on their part, were obtaining some very interesting information from the Tory leader; and, as the way was not clear as to a safe method of extricating themselves from the position of eavesdroppers, they could do nothing more than hold their peace and allow the entertainment to continue.

The Tory was enraged by the discovery that Rosa was the beloved of another, who was probably doing all he could at that moment to assist in placing her beyond his reach, and to raise himself in her affection by such a display of devotion.

"When are you going to cross over?" inquired his companion.

"Right away—we have waited too long already. The evening is well along, and we're losing time."

The sounds which succeeded showed that the party were moving nearer the river shore, having been standing a few feet off while holding the

conversation. Back in the darkness of the wood, Rosa and Ned were invisible, while they were able to catch the outlines of the moving figures when thrown against the dim sky beyond. It was plain that the party meant to use the canoe in which the girl had spent a portion of the afternoon, and which, it was intended, should serve as a vehicle to carry the whites to the other side.

The redmen were heard placing the boat in position, and the splash of the paddle was noticed as all took their places, and the oarsman assumed his duty of guiding the craft, burdened to its utmost capacity, across the Susquehanna. Colonel Butler, who had been so talkative a few minutes before, and also accommodating enough to reveal his purposes to those most concerned, seemed to have gone to the other extreme, for nothing more was heard from him. Captain Bagley took upon himself the task of directing the movements of the others, whenever they needed direction. The canoe, with its occupants, left the shore and was impelled into the Susquehanna, heading for the other bank, invisible in the gloom of the night. Before the craft had vanished, however, Ned caught sight of a couple of

figures on the bank immediately in front of where he was standing with Rosa.

"'Sh!" she whispered, detecting the fact at the same instant; "they have left a couple behind."

At this instant one of the forms turned and advanced toward them, the distance being so short that he had taken but a few steps when he arrived.

"Did you see them?" he asked, when he was at their side.

"See them? Of course we did," replied Rosa, recognizing her brother, "and we heard them, too. They've been standing and talking together right here, close enough for us to hear every word they said."

"Well, what did they say?"

"It would be hard to tell what they didn't say," replied Rosa, with something of her old spirit of mischief. "Colonel Butler is very sweet on some young rebel, which I am afraid is about my age, and looks very much like me. He has gone across the river to catch me before I can reach Wilkesbarre, but I don't see why he need be in a hurry, for I don't think we'll see that place within a couple of weeks, unless Lena-Wingo gets in more of a hurry than he is now."

This "satirical" remark was intended for the ears of the Mohawk, who had approached during the last few seconds, and who did not lose a syllable; but it would have taken more bitter words than ever fell from those sweet lips to stir any resentful feelings in his dusky breast.

"Talk much," was the only response he made, thereby uttering a truth which not even the young lady herself would deny.

"What else did he say?" asked Jo, referring to Colonel Butler.

"Well, the substance of it all was that he had sent a lot of Iroquois across the river to cut us off before we can reach Wilkesbarre, and he has no doubt they will succeed. He goes over himself, so as to be on hand, I believe, to take charge of me—that is, when *they catch me*."

"Is that all?"

"Do you think of anything more?" asked Rosa, addressing Ned.

"You have given all that was said—that is, all that is worth telling," answered the young man, into whose brain were burned some utterances which had not been referred to by his fair companion.

"If there is anything else," persisted Jo, "why, let's have it; for though it may seem trifling to you, it may be of importance when weighed by the Mohawk. Out with all you remember!"

"I have nothing more to tell," replied Ned, feeling the situation becoming embarrassing.

"I forgot something else," added the girl, in a light manner, that sent the shivers down the back of young Minturn, for his instinct told him what was coming. "You can't ask me to tell you all the bad words Colonel Butler used."

"Not unless you would like to go over them, but let me know what it was that *caused* him to speak in that style?"

"Oh! but he had good cause for it all, for that wicked Captain Bagley told him there was a young gentleman somewhere that thought all the world of me, and of whom I thought all the world, and the idea that I liked anybody else besides him was what made him so angry. I believe you have *all* now."

"Yes, I believe I have," replied Jo, with a low laugh. "Jack and I were standing almost as close to them as were you and Ned, and we heard their conversation."

If the pretty sister had possessed a parasol, she would have made her brother's head feel the weight thereof. All this was pure jest that seemed to intrude itself by a law of physiology into the hearts oppressed so long by grief, dread and anxiety. But there was one heart upon which the airy words fell with a weight of which the speakers never dreamed. To Ned Clinton there was something cruel in this reference to his affection for Rosa. He considered it a sacred secret—perhaps dimly suspected now by Rosa herself—too sacred, indeed, to be spoken of in jest by others.

He knew that his friends meant no unkindness, but it touched him scarcely the less for all that. He and Rosa had passed a few deep, earnest words, bearing upon that dream of the future which he cherished so fondly, and not the words merely, but the tones, the manner and the occasion gave them a significance which was of the profoundest import to him; and now to hear the maiden refer to them as she did pained him. Was it, then, all a jest to her? Did she regard the picture he had faintly limned as one of those unsubstantial dreams which the young and ambitious are so fond of drawing, and which can never be

realized? Did she look upon him merely as a friend—a dear one, perhaps, whom she had known and liked from their early childhood, because they had been schoolmates, and he and her brother were friends?

In short, was it not evidence that she merely *liked*, but felt nothing at all of *love*—that great over-mastering emotion that pervaded and swayed his whole nature?

## CHAPTER V.

### A LIGHT AHEAD.

On the eve of starting for their destination they were confronted by a practical difficulty, necessary to surmount before the journey could be made. Their enemies had coolly appropriated the boat in which they had intended to cross the river, and, another must be found for the use of the fugitives. Ordinarily, this would have been a small matter, but, coming as it did, it presented a difficulty not easily surmounted. Where was the canoe to be secured? Lena-Wingo was the one to whom the others looked to solve the problem, and he undertook it without delay.

"Stay here," said he. "Lena-Wingo find canoe."

"If you can manage to get back before to-morrow night," put in Rosa, "it may save us a deal of valuable time."

"Lena-Wingo come back soon as can—girl don't talk much."

"I am glad to hear you speak so encouragingly," she responded, as he moved off and

instantly vanished in the deep gloom of the night.

Left to themselves, the three had little to do but to wait and hope that their dusky friend would make good the promise of returning as soon as possible.

"It is one of those things that could not be discounted beforehand," said Jo Minturn, feeling that his sister was becoming unjustly impatient. "For no one could have dreamed that they would step up at the moment we were ready to start, and run off with the boat."

"They must have known nothing about Rosa having occupied it this afternoon," remarked Ned Clinton, glad of the chance of saying something that would ward off any approach to the matter that had caused him so much pain. "Their actions showed they did not suspect what had taken place while they were gone."

"Yes; some of them must have taken that boat to the place this forenoon or early in the afternoon, with the purpose of using it to carry the colonel to the other shore."

"Suppose Lena-Wingo doesn't find another canoe?" asked Rosa, who felt anything but comfortable over the absence of the tried and trusty scout.

"It may take him longer than he wants, but he will succeed, you may be sure of that."

"I should like to know why you and he went off in that mysterious fashion a short time ago?" continued the girl, addressing her brother. "It must have been a very important errand, judging from the way you managed it."

"Well, I think it *was* important, for it was to find something to eat, and I notice you are pretty sure to be interested in anything of that nature."

"Well, did you get any food?"

"We got on the track of some when Colonel Butler appeared with his Iroquois, and we had to take a look after them."

"So you didn't find any, after all," she repeated. "It is about what I expected when you went away."

"Don't be too quick to judge us," replied the brother, in a voice that was meant to signify a deal more than the mere words. "You'll be surprised before long."

"The only thing to surprise me will be to see something like haste used in getting over the river to Wilkesbarre. I suspect that Lena-Wingo will wait till daylight before making the start, even if he finds a canoe, on the ground that we

ought to have something to eat before starting."

A few minutes after, while the two were in an earnest discussion, the Mohawk appeared among them, and said, in his sententious manner:

"Come with me—walk still—make no noise."

The fugitives had been in enough danger to render this admonition unnecessary, but it was a warning which the Mohawk seemed to consider timely on all occasions, for he was much addicted to using it. It was so dark in the gloom of the forest that it was a matter of no small difficulty for the little party to keep together.

"Jo, you had better take my hand on one side, and you, Edward, on the other," said Rosa, "it is hard work to get along without help."

The suggestion was adopted without much perceptible increase of speed, as it still was necessary to feel their way with great caution to prevent collisions with trunks and limbs. But the bliss of Ned Clinton; who shall tell it? He forgot all the misery of a short time before when the world seemed dismal and full of despair, and was only conscious of the sweet fact that he held the hand of Rosa Minturn in his own! At the first touch it seemed that a thrill like the flash of the subtle magnetic current passed through him, and he

would not have cared if the journey continued for half a dozen miles, so long as this arrangement lasted.

The admonition of the red scout was not forgotten, and when they spoke it was in whispers, while frequent pauses were made, in answer to the faintest possible "'Sh!" of Lena-Wingo, who was conducting matters with his proverbial caution. Minturn saw something suggestive in the fact that their guide was leading them away from instead of toward the river, for the depths of the wood was not the place to look for the canoe, of which they stood in so much need just then. He suspected there was another reason, which would soon become apparent. Ned might have noticed the same fact and made inquiry about it, had he been capable of appreciating anything besides the delight of holding the hand of his beloved. That was happiness enough to last him at least for the time in which the journey continued, and he cared very little whither their guide led them, so long as he did not separate him from Rosa.

Where all was shrouded in such darkness, neither of the fugitives, with the exception of the Mohawk, was able to keep anything like a knowledge of the precise course which they were follow-

ing. The ground was familiar to all, and indeed there was not one who had not been over it so frequently that he or she would have identified it in the daytime. But when all was indistinguishable, in the darkness of the night, they could only trust to the skill of the dusky guide, who seemed able at any time to pick his way with unerring accuracy through the trackless forest.

In the earlier portion of the evening there was no moon, but after starting a faint one was observed in the sky, and enough of its rays penetrated the branches overhead to afford considerable assistance to the three who were threading their way as best they could in the track of the Mohawk. A few minutes after the moon was noticed, all were startled by hearing the discharge of a gun at no great distance on their left—that is, away from the river. They paused and listened, expecting something to follow that would explain what the report meant. But the stillness remained as profound as that of the grave, the night being so quiet that there was scarcely a rustle among the branches overhead, while not even the soft flow of the river reached their ears.

The pause was only a few minutes in length, when the cautious journey was resumed, still heading some little distance away from the stream which they were so anxious to cross. Rosa had observed this fact before, but she felt that it was hardly the thing to criticise the Mohawk when he was at work; but she was becoming impatient, and might have said something in the way of protest, but for the discovery that a bright light was shining ahead of them, which light undoubtedly meant something of interest to them all.

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE FRAGMENTS OF THE FEAST.

THE instant the light was detected, the attention of all the fugitives became centered upon it, for it was plain they were journeying in a direct line toward it, and unless a speedy turn to the right or left was made, the camp fire, as it appeared to be, would soon be reached. Viewed as they neared it, it seemed to be simply a fire, and nothing more, there being so many intervening trees and undergrowth, that nothing except the light itself was noticeable. But, as a rule, wherever there was a camp fire there were those who kindled it, and it struck Rosa that the Mohawk was reckless in advancing upon it; but she held her peace, certain he would commit no blunder.

The little party continued advancing steadily until within less than a hundred yards, when, as if by a common instinct, they halted, with their eyes bent inquiringly upon the fire. It was more plainly visible than before, and was seen to be

burning brightly, showing that if no persons were near it, they had been absent but a short time.

"Stay here—I go look—make no noise."

With these words, Lena-Wingo moved toward the blaze, and his tall, dark figure was seen more than once as in its stealthy advance it came between them and the flames. But, as it neared them, he made a turn which shut him from sight until a short distance away on his return. The Mohawk had been absent but a brief time, and when he rejoined them he said:

"Come 'long—walk fast—talk if want to."

This seemed curious advice, but it was accepted, and the fugitives kept up a constant talk in low tones, until they had halted before the fire itself. The expectation of Ned and Rosa was to meet some one, most probably a party of the settlers, who were taking refuge in the woods until the Indians and Tories should leave the valley; but in this they were disappointed. Halting directly before the blaze, they looked around, but saw no one besides themselves.

"Rosa," said Jo, with a meaning grin, "do you feel as though you can do justice to a lunch?"

Then the truth flashed upon her. Lena-Wingo had brought them thither for the purpose of furnishing them with supper. A protest rose to her lips, but she checked it, feeling that she had perhaps said too much already. Certainly if any one in the world ought to have faith in the skill and devotion of the Mohawk scout, she was that one, and she resolved at the instant she drove back the complaining words that they should remain unsaid, not for then only, but for all time.

"Well, yes, Jo; I *am* hungry, and if you have anything in the way of supper, I am sure it will be welcomed by all."

"How is it, Ned? Do you feel any hankering for eatables?"

"I do."

"Well, you shall have that yearning satisfied; when Jack and I went off, it was in search of food, for we need it, every one of us. Rosa seems to think we are loitering away our time, but Jack knows what he is doing. It is an easy matter to get across the river, but when on the other side our real trouble will begin. Colonel Butler expects us to cross the stream, and he won't make much effort to prevent us, but what he means to do is to keep us from reaching Wilkesbarre, and we

aren't going to get there in a hurry, either. Well, don't you see that we are likely to be in the woods a good while, and we may have to take a long circuitous route to get out? I shouldn't be surprised if we were two or three days longer on the way, for when Jack undertakes a job of this sort, he does it thoroughly, and he isn't the one to spoil it by hurry, no matter what his companions want him to do. All this being so, it isn't necessary to tell you that we must have our meals as regular as we can get them. If we eat a good supper now, we shall be able to pass to-morrow without any food, but it will go hard without anything in that line."

"If you will bring out your supper, Jo, and stop your chatter, I will agree to do the same, but I shan't believe you have anything in the way of food till I see it."

The brother kept up a stream of talk, in the way of badinage, asking his friends to name whatever article of diet they wished, as he could furnish one almost as well as another. Finally, when the thing had continued long enough, he produced the supper, and it was a surprise to Ned and Rosa indeed. While Lena-Wingo was engaged in stirring and throwing more wood on the fire,

Jo removed some fresh green leaves from a package that had been lying unnoticed near at hand, and within was found a large piece of roast pig! Furthermore, it was young, tender, well cooked, juicy and clean.

The appetites of all were keen, and as they took seats on the ground and ate as well as they could, with the help of the keen hunting knives of the party, it would have been impossible to enjoy it more. Nobody but the Mohawk knew how long it was since he had partaken of food, but had the period been a week, he could not have shown a keener relish for the nourishing meat. While employed in this pleasant manner, it was explained how it came about that they were furnished with this supper. As Jo had already told his sister, he and the Mohawk started off in quest of food, when they affected such a mystery in their movements.

It was no time nor neighborhood in which to look for game, and their purpose was to hunt some farm-house, where they hoped to find enough of the stock left to furnish them with one meal at least. While on their way through the woods, they came in sight of this same camp fire, which they approached and reconnoitered. The

first figure they recognized was that of Colonel Butler, and next to him was Captain Bagley, his well-chosen assistant, besides which there were four Iroquois Indians, whose principal business seemed to be that of roasting a plump pig, which they had stolen from some settler in the valley.

Colonel Butler was very loquacious, and talked so freely with the captain that his purpose of crossing the river speedily became known to the listening scouts. Some of his references to Rosa Minturn were such that Jo would have shot him as he sat eating by his own camp fire, had not the Mohawk interfered and quieted him with the philosophical observation:

"Hain't got gal yet—won't get her—talk won't hurt her."

Although it was certain that the party meant to cross the Susquehanna that night, probably as soon as the supper was finished, yet it did not occur to the Mohawk that they intended to use the canoe which was awaiting the whites. When the Tories and Iroquois completed their meal, they started for the stream, and Lena-Wingo and Jo followed, keeping them under scrutiny until they left the shore for the other side. The party went off leaving their camp fire burning

brightly, and as there was no reason to believe that any of their allies were near little was feared in returning to the scene and appropriating what was left as fragments of their feast.

The friends, therefore, ate with that enjoyment which comes of a sharp appetite, good food, and the consciousness that they need be in no hurry to finish. It was the purpose of the Mohawk to place his companions on the other side of the stream before daylight, but he convinced them that there was nothing to be gained by hurrying in the business.

As the weak force at the station of Wilkesbarre would be on guard against the approach of all enemies, especially during the darkness of the night, it would be a matter of difficulty, as well as one of extreme danger, to secure admission at that time. For this reason he preferred to do that part of his work in the daytime, when he could have an opportunity to use all his senses, and not be taken at a disadvantage.

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE REPORT OF A GUN.

THERE was one matter that caused Ned Clinton so much uneasiness that he appealed to the Mohawk to know whether some attention should not be paid to it. That was the report of the gun which they had heard while on the way to, and only a short distance from, this place. If a gun was fired, it followed that some one must have fired it, and the probabilities were the marksman was not far away. Such was the view of the young scout when he reflected upon the affair. Furthermore, nothing seemed so likely to attract the notice of friend or foe, at night, as the blazing camp fire—the most conspicuous object possible at such a time in the forest.

Lena-Wingo was not the one to forget an occurrence like the firing of a gun, and when the question was put to him by Ned, he answered in the most satisfactory manner. Upon his first approach to the camp fire, when conducting his

friends thither, he had made a complete circuit of the place, walking so far from the blazing sticks that the reconnoissance was as complete as it could be made. Failing to detect any sign of danger, he concluded that there was none. The gun whose report they had noticed he believed was fired by some white man who was lurking in the neighborhood, in the hope of being able to protect his property, or, more probably, with a view of securing something in the way of food, it might be, for a party of fugitives in hiding at no great distance.

There were many instances of such flight and concealment during the few days of, and succeeding, the massacre of Wyoming. Parties of men and women, who had not been demented by the atrocities that marked that dreadful era in the history of the settlement, were, in some instances, wise enough to seek some good hiding-place before exhausting themselves in the frantic efforts to flee.

By keeping a vigilant watch against the approach of their enemies, and by studiously avoiding an exposure of themselves, except when forced thereto, and by stealing out at night in quest of food, they were able to emerge from the reign of

terror far better than hundreds of their neighbors did.

Lena-Wingo was positive that the gun which alarmed them was discharged by a member of such a party, though what his precise reason was for the conclusion was more than any of the three could comprehend or suspect, and he did not make it clear to them. And so the supper of roast pig was eaten in peace, and with an enjoyment that has already been referred to. When it was finished, Jo said:

"Now, as there is no telling when we will be able to secure the next meal—for we can't expect Colonel Butler to keep up his supply of roast pig—I think we ought to take some of this with us to provide for emergencies."

"Where shall we get it?" was the pertinent question of his sister.

"Why, take along what is left."

"Have you any left?"

"Well, no, I haven't any, but I suppose the others have."

"Take a look, and let us know how much there is!"

Jo took the look, as suggested, and the result

was, as might have been suspected, there was not so much as an ounce of meat to be found. And yet, they had eaten every particle they wished, so that a more well-ordered meal could not have been furnished.

"What is the use of taking thought for the morrow?" asked Rosa. "Has not Lena-Wingo proved himself able to provide us with all we want in the way of food?"

"There is no denying that, but I only wanted to assist him in a simple matter; and if we are all to possess such appetites as we have shown to-night, it may not be an easy matter, after all, to keep up the quartermaster's supplies. However," he added, cheerfully, "we won't borrow trouble after the great good fortune that has followed us from the beginning."

They succeeded in making themselves comfortable in this respect, though now and then the manner in which the Mohawk acted caused a doubt to rise. Instead of sitting still, as did the others, while he was eating, he frequently rose to his feet and went off in the woods, the direction from which he reappeared showing that he had been making another of his reconnoissances of

their own position. Rosa explained to her companions that such was his invariable custom whenever he was in camp, and it was accepted as a way he had of conducting his own business.

As the party had secured a meal, the next thing was to find the canoe with which to cross the Susquehanna, a proceeding that had been delayed so long that more than one of the little company began to feel a superstitious fear that it might be they were doomed to stay forever on this side. This was a duty which, as a matter of course, belonged to the Mohawk, and, after his usual admonition to his friends about keeping silent during his absence, he went off again. As there was no telling how long the red scout would be gone, it remained for the three friends to content themselves as best they could until his return. This was a comparatively easy matter, or would have been, but for the memory of that single rifle-shot heard but a short time before reaching this spot.

"I think the best thing we can do," said Ned Clinton, "is to let this fire go out, or leave it altogether. We are too conspicuous here, and, as the night is quite warm, we can stay in one part as well as another."

"I would rather do it than not," replied Jo, "if we had only asked Red Jack before he went away; but it seems to be always an unlucky thing for us when we disregard his instructions."

"What do you think of it?" asked Ned, turning to Rosa, who, up to this time, had held her peace.

"I suppose Lena-Wingo would not be likely to make any objection, and if he did, I don't see why we should stay here and expose ourselves to danger on his account."

"Very well, I agree to that—"

To the amazement of all, a second report, apparently of the same gun, broke in upon their startled ears.

By a common instinct, they sprang to their feet, and started off in the gloom, expecting to learn the cause of the strange firing. The sound of some one hurrying rapidly over the leaves was heard by all, and Ned Clinton whispered to the rest:

"Quick! Back, out of the way!"

While the words were still in his mouth, the three retreated into the darkness of the woods beyond the light of the camp fire, and paused,

waiting, watching and listening. The rustling of the leaves, which had alarmed them so much a short time before, was heard no more, and the same oppressive, because suggestive, silence held reign. Who had fired the gun? At whom was it pointed? Was the marksman a white or red man? Were there more of the Iroquois in the immediate vicinity, and were they stealing up to this camp where the little party of fugitives had taken supper? Were the friends being drawn into a skilfully laid ambush? Such were some of the questions they asked themselves as they stood in the darkness of the forest, waiting for the cause of all this apprehension to come forth and show himself.

Suddenly the same soft rustling of the leaves was detected and whoever was the cause thereof was plainly approaching the camp fire. Then a form issued into view and paused. It was Lena-Wingo, the Mohawk. His friends instantly gathered about him to learn the success of his errand, and the explanation of the report of the rifle.

"You hear gun?" asked the red scout.

"Of course we did," answered Ned, "and what did it mean?"

The old grin came back to the face of the Mohawk as he replied: "That gun fired by white man. He aim at Lena-Wingo!" was the astounding information he gave his companions.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### MR. ISAAC PERKINS.

GRINNING in his imperturbable fashion, the Mohawk turned part way round, and made a signal, evidently for some one invisible to all. Be that as it may, it was instantly responded to by the coming forward of a man in the ordinary dress of a farmer settler of the valley. He had an honest countenance, and was about forty years old. As he came into full view, so that the firelight fell full upon his face, he was recognized as an old acquaintance, named Perkins, who lived but a short distance from where the camp fire was burning.

"Wall, how are ye all?" he asked in a drawling voice and an accent that betrayed the fact that he was one of the descendants of the Connecticut pioneers that built Forty Fort, not a great many years before. "I say, how are ye all?" he continued, as he began shaking hands round. "I'll be shot if I expected to see any one

of ye folks round here. I say, how are ye all agin?"

"Well, Ike," replied Ned Clinton, who was well acquainted with him, and felt authorized to answer, "we are all right, as you can see for yourself, and you seem to be equally fortunate."

"Wall, I s'pose I am," was the hesitating answer, "the main trouble being that we have been suffering for the last few days from a dreadful scare; but then we hain't been injured in any way, thanks be to the Lord for it all."

"Then you aren't alone—"

"Yes, I am," interrupted the farmer; "that is, when I'm abroad."

The precise meaning of this was not clear to the listeners, but Ned continued without noticing it:

"I did not see you in the battle, Mr. Perkins."

"No, thanks be to the Lord for it all, I was able to keep out by running away, when the battle begun, or rather a little before. I had hard work to get clear; thanks to the Lord, I managed to do it."

"Where's your family?"

"Wall, now, thar's where I've ben specially favored again. You know that there are three of us—myself, Mrs. Perkins, and Master George Washington Perkins, aged four years, so I had my hands full in looking after them; but the second Mrs. Perkins is a remarkable woman, and possesses an exceedingly powerful mind—an exceedingly powerful mind, beyond all question. I must give her the credit for the able management of this enterprise, for she deserves more credit than I. You know how brave a man I am by nature, and how I have a natural hankering for gore. Wall, that yearning to be killing some one made me furious to plunge head first into the battle when it began raging down the valley, and I started seventeen times—yes, seventeen times—to go in to do or die, I didn't care which, but Mrs. Perkins had her eagle eye on me, and every time I made a rush, she rushed also, and caught me by the coat-tails, and nothing short of an earthquake could have persuaded her to let go. Wall, to make that story short, she prevailed, and kept me out of the struggle, thanks be to the Lord for all that."

"But how did you manage to keep clear of the Indians?"

"There it was her planning again. She called to mind a spot in the woods not far away, where, when she was a sweet little girl, she used to play hide-and-whoop with her playmates, and where she was always able to secure a hiding that baffled the skill of her young friends, and straightway it occurred to her that there was the very spot in which to take refuge, and there we went."

"Any trouble in getting there?"

"Nothing to speak of," replied the farmer, in his loftv way. "Of course the Tories and Indians tried to head us off, but I had a gun, and the strength of my good right arm, and more than all that, I had Mrs. Perkins as my second in command, and where was the use of anyone trying to break such a combination as that? We were bound to prevail, and we never allowed ourselves to be turned aside by any trifles, and we reached the refuge in safety, and there we are staying, and expect to stay till things quiet down again."

"But how did you manage for food?" asked Jo, desirous of testing the accuracy of the Mohawk's judgment when he declared that the first gun fired had been discharged by a man in the situation of Perkins while searching for something to eat.

"Wall," he said, in the old drawling style peculiar to men who love to hear themselves talk, "when stealing becomes a matter of necessity, it ain't stealing any longer, and I have been in the habit of slipping out on the sly and fetching down some of the stock that's roaming through the woods without knowing who their master is —thanks be to the Lord for all that!"

"Was that you who fired off your gun a little while ago?"

"I've shot off my rifle twice within the last hour. The first time was at a hog, and I missed him, for, somehow or other, the rampaging of the Indians and Tories through the valley seems to have upset everything, the dumb animals as well —Mrs. Perkins is more nervous than usual— thanks be to the—I was about to say that the dumb critters know that something is going on round them that ain't right, and they are as wild as mad bulls, which is why I come to miss hitting that porker."

So the rather lengthy reply of the loquacious farmer proved that Lena-Wingo was accurate in his opinion as to the reason the former shot was fired.

"Was your second shot sent after another wild animal?"

At this question, Mr. Perkins looked meaningly at the Mohawk and laughed:

"Wall, no; I don't suppose it would be safe to call Red Jack a wild animal, but when I caught sight of him, or, rather, heard him moving through the woods, I set him down as one of the Iroquois, who have made Mrs. Perkins so nervous—thanks to the—I say I set him down as one of those villains, and I blazed away."

"Did you hit him?"

"Wall, no—thanks to the Lord for it all—for, to tell the truth, I didn't try, for I don't like to pick off a man in that style without giving him a little notice, though I'm sorry to say I've had to do it more than once. I just meant to give him a scare, and I guess I made out to do that—didn't I, Jack?"

"Not much scare—don't shoot straight," was the rather uncomplimentary reply of the Mohawk.

"Wall, we won't quarrel over that, Jack, for I'm mighty glad I didn't hurt you. I would have felt very bad if I had shot such a good fellow as you."

"Do you know whether there are any more Indians in this neighborhood?"

"I don't think there are any nearer than Forty Fort; they have been rampaging up and down the valley for the past two or three days, but they must have found that I'm around, for they are a good deal more afraid than they were. But then there was quite a lot of them through these parts to-day."

"Did you see Colonel Butler and his party?"

"Oh, yes," answered the settler, as though he pitied the ignorance of his listeners, "I have had them under my eye ever since they came out of the fort. Do you know that I came very near capturing them all?"

Ned replied that they had no knowledge of such a startling fact.

"The minute I laid eyes onto them, I made up my mind they were up to some deviltry, and I watched them—watched them as a cat does a mouse. I heard that old rascal say something about his looking for the purtiest lady in the valley, and I knew at once he meant Mrs. Perkins, and that roused my dander, as you may guess, and I swore I would go for him. I was so mad

that I was determined to snatch the whole party, and I laid my plans to do it."

"And how was it that you failed?"

"By the merest slip in the world. My plan was to follow close behind, dogging their footsteps, and picking them off one by one till they were all gone. It would have been a big thing, wouldn't it?"

"Most certainly it would; and why did you fail?"

"Wall, I'm just telling you; it didn't take me long to fix up all my scheme, and I had just drawn a bead on Colonel Butler, having Captain Bagley in a line, too, so that I was sure to fetch them both, when I happened to remember that my gun wasn't loaded. I drew off to load it with an extra large charge, when something must have told them of the danger that threatened, for they moved off and before I could find them again it was so dark that they couldn't be found, and so by that narrow chance they all escaped."

## CHAPTER IX.

### BORDER BRAVERY.

MR. PERKINS having been allowed to relate his own story—in the telling of which he drew a pretty long bow—his listeners judged it was time to do something practical. He was asked therefore whether he could inform them where to lay hands on a boat with which to cross the Susquehanna.

"Do I know where a boat is?" he repeated, as if surprised at the mere idea that he could not give the information. "Why, of course I do. There's one only a short distance from where we are standing this very minute."

"Perhaps you refer to the one which Colonel Butler appropriated for himself," suggested Ned, whose faith in the man was considerably lessened by what he told them.

"No such thing; I'll put one in your hands in five minutes, if you will go with me."

The three friends looked at Lena-Wingo, as if they wished his opinion before they assented to

the proposal. The Mohawk had been a patient listener throughout, and he nodded his head and set the example by leading the way.

"Go with him—he find boat."

Mr. Perkins seemed to form an exalted idea of his own usefulness by the consciousness that he was the real guide for the time being, and he stalked off like some leader of his clan. The apprehension that he was misleading them was quieted by the confidence which the Mohawk showed in his offer.

"I don't think there's any Indians or Tories about here, and the Lord be thanked," remarked the settler, who found it about impossible to hold his tongue when it was once loosed; "but it will be well to act as if there was danger at every turn now. I advise you all to do like me—and that is, not to speak a word when on the way through the woods—for I tell you that it is the easiest thing in the world to let a whole tribe know your poking round—"

"Be still!" struck in the Mohawk, evidently angered, where the others were only amused. "Talk too much!"

This peremptory summons to put a check to his clatter was accepted in the most philosophic

manner by the individual for whom the command was intended.

"That's what I have always maintained," he said. "People are ever inclined to use their tongues more than they ought."

"Is your gun loaded?" asked Lena-Wingo, in a more considerate manner.

"Yes. I have got a double charge in her."

Thereupon the Indian whispered to Ned Clinton and Jo Minturn to drop quietly behind, doing it in such a way that their disappearance would not be noticed by their vaunting leader. The hint was acted upon and within five minutes from the time it was given, Mr. Perkins was conducting only the red scout through the forest, while he supposed the three were directly in the rear of him, awed and speechless by the stunning observations he was continually making for their benefit.

"As I was about to remark when you interrupted me," continued the loquacious settler, "there is no fault more frequent than that of using the tongue when it should be permitted to rest, and the Lord be thanked that weakness can never be laid to my charge. When Mrs. Perkins and me was a-coming to our retreat in

the woods, she was so inclined to talk that I had to admonish her several times it was likely to get us into trouble. But law me! who ever heard of a handsome young lady that would take any advice about talking? Mrs. Perkins is very sensitive on that subject, and she chose to disregard what I said, and what was the consequence? Why, my friends—it wasn't five—certainly not ten—minutes after that, while we were picking our way along as best we could—What's that?"

The settler paused in his walk and talk, like one who was suddenly apprised that he was on the brink of some peril.

"What's that?" he repeated in a whisper, turning his head toward the Mohawk, who was dimly discernible in the gloom.

"Iroquois Indian look for you."

"Good heavens and earth! You don't think so, do you?" fairly gasped the man, trembling with affright.

"He Indian—he hear you talk—he come look for you."

"Oh, heaven! It won't do for me to stay here," whispered the poor fellow, beginning a cautious retreat that brought him into collision with the

Mohawk, who was standing perfectly still, as if listening for something that would tell him what the real danger was.

Lena-Wingo threw him off with such force that he stumbled forward upon his hands and knees.

"What the blazes are you doing?" demanded the indignant Perkins, scrambling to his feet. "What's the use of knocking a feller over that way?"

By this time he was erect and gazing, or rather glaring, back into the gloom, as if to make sure where his man was standing and then demolish him. But, to his amazement, his man was not to be seen; he had fled,—driven away, as the settler believed, by the fear of the other Indians that were so near at hand. Perkins was silent for a moment, not knowing what he should do. Then he called the name of the Mohawk in a cautious tone:

"Hello! Leaner-Winger, where are you?"

But the silence gave no token, and he pronounced the name of Ned, Jo and Rosa in turn, without any further success.

"They've all left me," he muttered angrily. "All of them together haven't the courage that I have alone. Wall, I can get along without them

if they can without me; but if there are Indians, I'll bet they'll be sorry they gave me the slip. It ain't every party that's lucky enough to have a man of my experience and skill and courage to help them out of trouble—blazes!"

The bravery of the settler, which had been growing during the silence succeeding the first alarm, suddenly collapsed when his ear caught a sound, precisely as if some one was stealing over the leaves toward him. There must be real danger after all!

"Who's there?" called Perkins, in a shiver. "If you don't answer I'll shoot."

Nevertheless, no answer was evoked by such a threat and the settler made up his mind that if he could not effect an orderly retreat he must make some kind of a fight. Accordingly, he peered ahead in the darkness, seeking a view of the crouching redskin, with the purpose of giving him the whole charge of the musket.

"I hope there ain't more than one of them, for if there happens to be," he said to himself, "I ain't likely to get a chance to reload before they come down on me. It was an infernal mean piece of business in that crowd to sneak off that way

and leave me in the lurch just when I was likely to need their help."

While he was muttering in his endless fashion, he was still retreating as stealthily as possible, hoping to get far enough off from the dangerous spot to give himself a chance to make a run for some safe concealment. He had taken only a step or two, when he was hailed from somewhere in the gloom ahead.

"Stop, white man, or me take scalp!"

The settler paused at this fearful summons and his knees smote together.

"Wh-wh-what do yo-yo-you want?" he stammered, hardly conscious of what he was saying.

"Want your scalp, white man."

"Thunderation! I hain't got any! My wife pulled out all my hair the first week we were married. I'm bald-headed, so what's the—"

"Stop!" broke in the voice of the hidden Indian, who seemed to know that he was trying to steal away.

"Well, what do you want?" asked the victim, showing a disposition to argue the matter.

"Want your scalp! Come up—hand it to me."

This was more than flesh and blood could stand. With a howl of terror the settler whirled

around and dashed into the depths of the forest, never pausing long enough to notice that the voice which addressed such terrifying words to him was that of Lena-Wingo, the Mohawk.

## CHAPTER X.

### ON THE RIVER.

AFTER the unceremonious flight of Mr. Perkins, the whites gathered around the Mohawk and expressed a fear that their little joke had resulted in the loss of the boat which the frightened settler was about to place in their possession. But the Indian assured them there was no loss on that account, as he knew the precise point where, if there was any boat within reach, it would be found. He proved the truth of what he said by leading them to the shore of the river, where, sure enough, the very thing for which they were looking was discovered.

"I feel like forgiving Ike for all those tremendous yarns he told us," said Clinton, when the prize was found.

"Well, I don't think he has suffered any harm beyond a good scaring, which he deserved," added Rosa, who enjoyed the discomfiture of the settler as much as did the Mohawk himself.

When they came to examine the vessel more carefully, however, there was some disappointment; for, instead of being a neat, clean canoe, like the one in which the girl had spent a portion of the day, it was a very ordinary structure, known along the rivers of the eastern part of the country as a "scow," and which under any circumstances was incapable of any speed. It was not propelled in the same manner as a canoe, the only implement being a long pole, so that if they should happen to get beyond their depth, they would be totally at sea. The only good quality it appeared to possess was that it was perfectly tight,—a quality not often seen in crafts of its class,—and the bottom was without a drop of water. Ned and Jo were so disappointed in the boat that they proposed, in the same breath, that they should look further before making the attempt to reach the other side.

"Suppose we were seen by Colonel Butler or any of his men," said Jo. "We would be at their mercy. It strikes me as very likely that we may encounter them, and what will we do, with nothing but a pole to push the old thing through the water?"

"I am of the same opinion," said Ned. "It will be a hard task to work our passage over, any way, not to mention the danger of being seen by some of the Iroquois. What do you think, Rosa?"

"I don't fancy a voyage in such a vessel; but the river is not very wide, and I am afraid that if we stop to hunt up another, to-morrow morning will find us on this side of the Susquehanna."

While these words were passing between the three, the Mohawk stood somewhat apart, silent, grim, and listening. He appeared interested in what was said, but showed no inclination to say anything until directly appealed to.

"Are you satisfied to trust yourself in such a craft?" asked Jo, as he faced the silent one. "Tell us what you think of it."

They were now entirely out of the forest, so that the faint light of the moon enabled them to see each other's faces quite well. When Lena-Wingo was appealed to, it was natural that the others should look him full in the face and, as they did so, each saw the old grin with which they were becoming so familiar.

"Lena-Wingo say nothing," was the unexpected reply of their guide, who still leaned on the pole as if waiting for the others to finish their discussion and enter the boat.

"But you must say something," persisted Jo; "you don't suppose we are going to let our haste to cross blind us to the means we use."

"If want to go over t'other side, Lena-Wingo push over—if don't want to go in boat, Lena-Wingo wait and get t'other boat."

This answer was hardly more satisfactory than the first, and Jo refused to accept it as an answer at all.

"We aren't going to let you get out that way," continued the young scout; "we want a reply to the question I put to you."

Without relaxing the broad grin on his painted face, the Mohawk said:

"Lena-Wingo take over in this boat, if want to go."

Jo was half angry, and was on the point of saying something impatient, when his sister interfered.

"Lena-Wingo has answered your question, Jo; he says that he will take us across in this boat,

if we want him to, and I'm sure that is as plain an answer as any one could ask for."

"It isn't as clear as I want, but if you are satisfied I'm certain that Ned and I are also, and have nothing more to say."

"I am not afraid to trust myself in this boat with him, for I am convinced he would n't undertake it if he was n't confident he could accomplish the voyage. So go ahead, Lena-Wingo, for there has been so much delay that we'll never get across if we wait much longer."

This settled the question, and the preparations for the embarkation followed immediately. The scow was shoved off a little from the shore, so that the combined weight would not make it too difficult to move it. Then Rosa took her place in the furthest part, and her brother and lover did the same. Lena-Wingo waited till all had arranged themselves, when he forced the craft clear of the land, and sprang lightly into it, as it was still moving away into the stream.

The handling of a pole is not an occupation to which the Indians, as a general thing, are trained, and it was not to be expected that the Mohawk would display anything like the skill which he possessed in the management of the paddle. But

Lena-Wingo was one of those individuals, occasionally seen, who seem to take naturally to any kind of physical exercise, and he controlled the rather awkward implement in a way that excited more than one commendatory remark from the two youths who were watching him.

This species of craft is intended for water close to the land, and always where it is shallow, so that the redman was under a disadvantage, even with all his skill. As the pole was long enough to touch the bottom in any portion of the stream, there was no fear that he would not reach the other shore, provided he was not disturbed by his enemies; but when his companions reflected on what might take place, in case they were forced to resort to anything like a contest with the Iroquois, they could not but shudder, and regret that the start was made.

They had hardly left the land behind them when, as if by a common impulse, all three of the whites turned their heads and gazed doubtfully at the shore they were approaching. In the gloom of the night it could not be seen at all, a dark wall seeming to shut it from view. As the water deepened, the current became swifter and the task of managing the unwieldly craft more

difficult, though it was hard to see how any one could have done better than the Mohawk.

It was impossible to cross in anything like a direct line, and it was found that they were drifting rapidly down stream. Still, Lena-Wingo persevered in his calm, unexcited way until the middle of the river was nearly reached, when it struck both the young scouts that it was hardly the thing for them to sit idle in the boat while he was toiling so manfully to work his way over. Ned whispered to Jo that he meant to take a hand at the pole.

"Do so," whispered his friend back again, "and when you are tired, I will try it, for it will tire us all pretty well before we make the other shore. I am sure you can do as well as he."

Ned arose at once, and stepping across the length of the swaying craft, reached out his hand for the pole.

"Let me help you, Jack; there is no need of wearying yourself out when we are doing nothing."

Ned expected that the Mohawk would refuse to let him interfere, but, to his surprise, he assented at once.

"Take him—he ain't a paddle," replied the redman, passing the implement over to him.

"You are right on that point," laughed the youth as he accepted it from him, and almost immediately found the truth of the declaration verified in his own experience.

They were in deeper water than they supposed, the depth having increased very rapidly in the last few minutes. But Clinton went at the work manfully, with the determination to do all he could for the "good of the cause."

## CHAPTER XI.

### AN UNFAVORABLE OMEN.

NED pressed the pole into the bottom of the river, which was so far below that only a few feet of the stick remained above the surface, and he was forced to lean over the side of the craft to secure any leverage. Any one who has tried it knows that it is next to impossible to accomplish much under similar circumstances, and the young scout was of the opinion that he was not making any progress at all toward the other shore.

"We are in the deepest part," said Jo, with a view of encouraging him.

"And it looks as if we were going to stay there," replied Ned, straining and pushing at his work.

"This deep part must be very narrow, and you'll soon be over it."

"That's the trouble," said his friend, with a laugh, "I am over it, and don't see that there is much prospect of my getting anywhere else."

Still he worked and toiled at the greatest possible disadvantage, the swaying of the boat frequently causing it to baffle all his efforts to move onward. Several times, when he braced his shoulders, the craft would sag against the pole with such force as almost to wrench it from his grasp.

"Keep heart," called out Jo. "I think you are gaining."

"In which way?"

"We're a few inches nearer the southern shore than we were—"

"When we started," interrupted Ned, showing a very modest estimate of his own abilities in the way of managing the craft.

Jo rose and went to the side of his friend, hoping that he might be of assistance, for he clearly needed something of the kind.

"Let me take hold," said he, "or we are stuck, as sure as you live."

"I don't see how you can be of any help to me," answered Ned, who would have been glad enough to receive it, if there was any direction in which it could be applied. "You notice the trouble is that it so deep just here, and the current so strong, that it bothers a fellow amazingly. Now, if you will get overboard and push the

stern you will do some good, but I don't see that you are going to amount to anything in any other way."

"Then I rather calculate that I won't amount to anything at all," was the sensible conclusion of the other, as he returned to his place beside his sister and the Mohawk.

There was reason to believe that the labors of Ned Clinton were not entirely in vain, even though they were not encouraging. The boat was certainly progressing, and the height of the pole above the water showed that the depth was less by a few inches than before.

It must continue to diminish, and as it did so, the boatman would gain, in a corresponding degree, his control of the craft. A few minutes after this the truth became apparent to Ned himself, and he toiled all the harder, until he regained, in a great degree, his mastery over the scow.

"Whew!" he exclaimed, as he paused a moment to catch breath. "I feel like giving a hurrah for me!"

"You deserve a great deal of credit," said Rosa, "I thought several times you had undertaken something more than you could accomplish. But

you stuck to it bravely, and if it was only safe, I should like to hear a cheer for you."

"Very well; we'll consider it given."

"If you wait much longer with that pole doing nothing," added Rosa, looking down stream as she spoke, "I think we'll arrive opposite the fort, where some of the Iroquois will be sure to see us."

Once more the pole was thrust against the bottom, and immediately the craft responded to the impulse, and all felt high hopes of making the other bank in a few minutes.

While the light talk was going on, the Mohawk was scanning the shore they were approaching, for it was all-important that they should strike it at some point where none of their enemies could see them. Several times he hushed his companions when they were talking in too unrestrained a manner, for the sound of anything can be heard a long distance over the water on a still summer night, and there was danger of being betrayed in that way. The party had advanced so far by this time, that the outline of the bank was dimly discerned ahead of them. It was nothing more than a heavy wall of shadow, showing where the

trees came down to the edge of the water, but it was the kind of shore they wanted to see.

"Let me take a hand," said Jo, as he stepped up beside his friend. "You must be pretty well tired out by this time."

"I can take the old scow to the land as well as not, but, as you haven't had anything to do since we started, I'll let you try it awhile."

Accordingly, Jo pressed the pole against the hard bottom of the Susquehanna, and the progress continued without interruption until some half a dozen rods were passed, when operations were suddenly checked by the Mohawk uttering his warning aspiration:

"'Sh!"

This was as effective as if he had called out in a loud voice that the Iroquois were upon them. Jo paused on the instant, and like the rest glanced at the Indian to learn what it meant. Up to that moment all, with the exception of him who managed the pole, were seated on the gunwale, but the Mohawk, at the instant of uttering the exclamation, rose to his feet, and was seen to be looking toward the land which was their destination. Since this placed his back toward

his friends, they could only gaze in the same direction in quest of the cause of his alarm.

At first they saw nothing, but in a few seconds the explanation came in the shape of a light, which resembled a torch carried in the hands of some one who was walking along the edge of the water. As this light showed itself near the spot at which they were aiming, it was high time they halted. The whole party, gazing in the direction of the strange illumination, made an interesting tableau while drifting down the river. The torch —if such it was—continued visible but a few seconds, when it vanished as if plunged into the water.

Here was another unexpected interference with their plans, and the old feeling of doubt came to the heart of Rosa Minturn, when she recalled the extraordinary delay that had attended their attempts to get to Fort Wilkesbarre, and now when her hopes were high, and they were actually in sight of the shore, this mysterious light had come to warn them off.

Lena-Wingo did not stand idle long when they were confronted by such danger, but turning about, stepped hastily back to where Jo was

awaiting the word of command, and took the pole from him.

"Must go back—Iroquois heard us coming—watch for us."

More than one heart sank as these words were uttered, for all felt that it was a bad omen thus to turn back, when they were so near the land they were seeking. There was another fact which was equally apparent, and which caused them no very pleasant reflection. They had very likely betrayed themselves by their own indiscretion, in talking in tones that reached the ears of those who were watching for them. No one was to blame, therefore, but themselves for the unfortunate situation in which they were placed.

Jo yielded the pole without a murmur, and the Mohawk applied it with a power and skill that made the retrogression much faster than was the progress in the other direction. When the deepest portion of the channel was reached, Lena-Wingo used the implement with a great deal more cleverness than Ned Clinton had displayed, and it was crossed in considerably less time than before. Then, as the more shallow water came, and the craft was quite manageable, the Mohawk

stopped work, and holding the pole motionless and motioning his friends not to speak or move, he listened, they also using their eyes and ears to the best of their ability.

## CHAPTER XII.

### FORCED BACKWARD.

Ear and eye were strained to catch sound or sight that would tell something of their enemies. All, even the Mohawk, expected to hear the ripple of the paddles of the Iroquois in pursuit, but the stillness of the tomb was not more profound than that in which they were now enfolded. Probably a half mile below them another light was seen shining, and almost directly opposite was a similar one. It looked as if the Iroquois were signaling to one another; and, if it so happened that this scow, with its occupants, was the object of these communications, the latter might well feel anxiety about their situation.

Lena-Wingo seemed puzzled to find that there was no evidence of his enemies being immediately behind them, for he was confident that the light which had arrested the forward movement of the boat was not only in the hands of one of the Iroquois, but was intended as a signal to apprise others that the fugitives had been discovered, and

the time had come to close in upon them. What, therefore, meant this profound stillness, at a time when the sounds of the most active pursuit ought to have been heard? Could it mean, after all, that the light was an accident, and the redmen had seen nothing of the fugitives stealing in upon them? While the Mohawk was revolving the matter in his mind, Rosa Minturn uttered a suppressed exclamation:

"See there!"

It so happened, at that moment, that she was the only one of the party gazing in the direction of the shore which they had originally left, and she alone made the discovery that instantly turned all eyes in that direction. Exactly at the spot where they would have been landed by the Mohawk—allowing for the inevitable dropping down stream—was still another light, resembling the first that had startled them.

This was complicating matters, indeed, and the alarm of the whites became greater than at any time since starting. It looked as if they had not only been detected, but that the Iroquois had quietly perfected their preparations for capturing them. The Mohawk, as was his peculiarity under all circumstances, was as cool as ever, and he

looked back and forth as if not particularly desirous of learning who were the torch-bearers.

"Don't stand up," he whispered, fearing that some of his companions would rise to their feet in their excitement.

There was a possibility that the fugitives had not been detected, though the probabilities were against such a hopeful fact. It would have seemed to an uninterested spectator that if the Iroquois were aware that the party whom they were seeking had embarked, they would have kept them under surveillance until they learned where they were likely to land, and then would have made preparations to capture them as they left the boat. Such was the simplest plan, and it would have been more effective than any other. That they had neglected to do so was ground for the hope of the Mohawk that he and his friends were still undiscovered.

It was equally probable that the redmen on the southeastern shore, having learned that their game was coming into their hands, had signaled the fact to their allies across the Susquehanna, so that they might be prepared for the retrograde movement which was actually made. Under the circumstances, there was but one thing remaining

for the Mohawk to do, and that was to drift with the current until below the point where the last light had shown itself, and then to make an effort to land. Fortunately, the woods were dense at this place, so that if they could secure a foothold once more, there was a good prospect that this natural protection could be turned to account. And this was what the guide now attempted to do.

Stooping low in the boat, so that his head and shoulders barely appeared above the gunwale, he held the pole ready to use any instant it might be required, and patiently awaited the moment when the flat-bottomed craft should reach the point desired. The excitement was the more intense because none dared move, and all were in a state of expectancy that made the suspense of the most trying nature. It seemed to the whites as they peeped cautiously over the low gunwale of the scow, that the moon threw double the light that it did when they were in the middle of the river and anxious to gain a view of the land they were seeking to reach. Again and again Rosa was sure she saw shadowy figures stealing along in the darkness, watching them with the keenness of so many lynxes, and quite as fre-

quently she was equally sure she detected stealthy movements by the sound of the moccasin-covered feet on the bank.

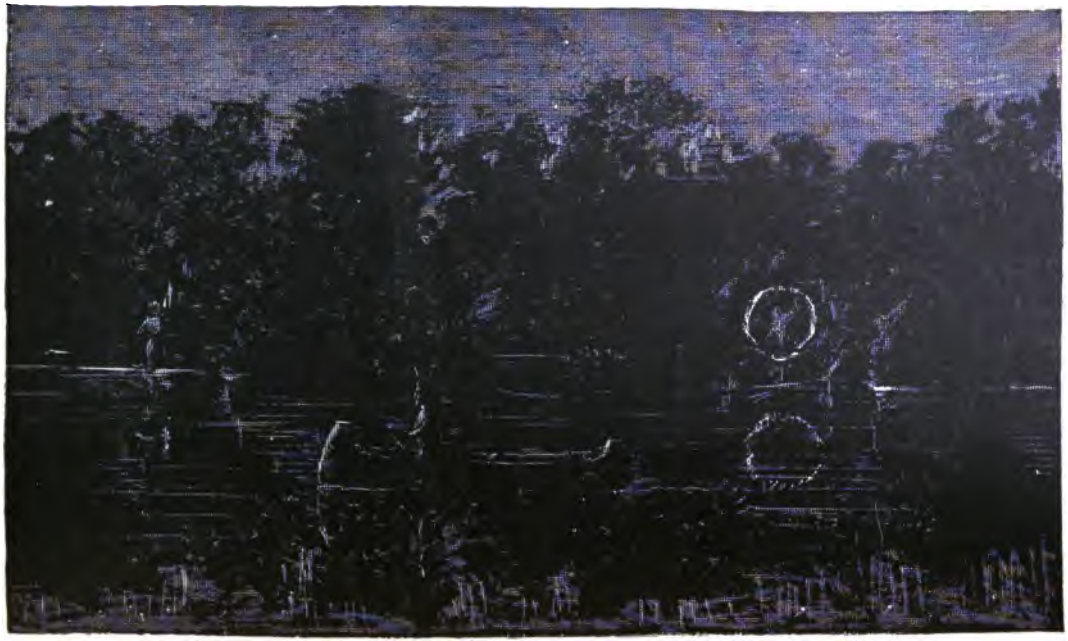
Before they were a dozen feet below the point where the light was seen, it vanished from sight and the gloom enveloped them on every hand. While this was taken as another ominous sign by the whites, the Mohawk did not accept it as such. If the torches were meant as signals, nothing was more natural than that, having performed their duty, they should be withdrawn. The four parties in the scow maintained their cramped positions until the boat was a hundred yards below where the alarming light was seen. At this time, the Mohawk rose partly to his feet still keeping the greater portion of his body concealed, and the pole was carefully thrust over the side into the water.

No noise accompanied the cautious movement, but the others noticed that the boat felt the impulse at once. Lena-Wingo was using it for its legitimate purpose, and was gradually, but none the less certainly, working in toward the land. It seemed to the others that such a proceeding was dangerous in the highest degree, for the boat, on account of its size, was likely to attract atten-

tion. It was impossible that the others should keep their own persons out of sight when the situation was so critical. Ned and Jo closed their hands upon their rifles, ready to use them at an instant's notice, for to them nothing was more probable than that they would be called upon to resist an attack as soon as, if not before, they placed their feet on the shore.

When they were within a rod or so, the Mohawk ceased work with the pole, and devoted himself to listening for a short time. Unlike the others, he did not confine his observations to a single spot, but peered toward every point of the compass, on the watch for some canoe creeping down upon them from the other side of the stream. His keen vision was unable to detect anything upon the surface of the stream itself, but he saw once more the light that had caused them to turn back from landing. It was in very nearly the same spot, too, where it was first seen, and, what was more, it was moving precisely as if intended to convey a hasty message to parties on the opposite side the stream.

Lena-Wingo studied the action closely, for he was capable of reading many of the signs of the Iroquois unknowable to others, and there was a



BUT HE SAW ONCE MORE THE LIGHTS THAT HAD CAUSED THEM TO TURN BACK.—Page 98.

chance for him to gain important information. The torch was not merely vibrating as if carried by a person walking along the margin of the river, but it was swung round in a circle, slowly and impressively, beginning in this fashion, and increasing until it resembled a fiery wheel. Suddenly it disappeared, and all was darkness and stillness again on both sides of the Susquehanna.

"The whites and the Mohawk scout are on the river, and will try to return to the shore which they left."

This was the interpretation of Lena-Wingo, and it was about impossible for him to make any mistake. The retrogression of the fugitives had been detected, and the confederates on the bank toward which they were working their way were notified to be prepared for their coming. Certainly it was high time that the little party in the scow looked to what they were doing.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### NEW PERIL.

With the hostile Iroquois on both sides the Susquehanna, and the awkward scow near the shore, it will be seen that the situation of the fugitives, striving to reach the protection of Wilkesbarre, was not of an encouraging nature. The Mohawk was confident that he had read the meaning of the waving torch aright, and that if he expected to reach the shore immediately behind him, it must be done at once.

The signal light was scarcely extinguished when he rose to a stooping position, and applied the pole with all the vigor at his command. It was astonishing to see the speed he was able to force out of the unwieldy structure. The foam actually curled away from the bow, and in a few seconds it ran plump against the bank and stuck fast.

"Now is our time," said Ned, as he caught the hand of Rosa, who sprang up at the same instant with her brother.

"Yes; it won't do to wait a second," added Jo.

"Sh! move fast—don't make noise," put in the Mohawk.

In a twinkling the entire party had landed, and hurried away from the spot, expecting some of the Iroquois would be there within a very short time. They were right in this supposition, and were none too soon in getting away from the place. The Mohawk led the way directly up stream, keeping close to the shore, but still leaving enough space between them and the water for the passage of a number of their enemies.

It was certainly less than three minutes after the landing of the whites that sounds around them were detected, proving that the redmen were hastening to the spot. Their failure to be there when the landing took place seemed to point to the conclusion that they must have failed to keep track of the craft after receiving the notification from the allies across the river. The faintest possible "Sh!" from the Mohawk apprised his companions that danger was close, and all came to an instant halt. The sounds of the Iroquois moving near them were slight, but they told the story as plainly as if the sunlight revealed every form.

As might be expected, the Indians did not take long to find the scow that had been abandoned by the fugitives. And when the craft was discovered it told its own story. The nest was warm, but the bird had flown. When the Iroquois realized this fact, they exchanged a few words, which the Mohawk heard and understood, for they were in his own tongue.

"We have come too late to find the pale faces," said one.

"They have gone," replied another. "They are hiding in the woods, and we shall not find them till to-morrow."

"They cannot cross the big brook," continued one who seemed to be the first speaker. "When the sun comes to light up the forest, then we will take their trail and hunt them to their holes, and before the sun goes down there shall not be a scalp left but on the head of the Flower of the Woods."

"And the traitor Lena-Wingo, what shall be done with him?"

"His scalp shall be torn from his head and flung in his face. Then he shall be taken to the towns of the Iroquois and tied to a tree, and left till the birds pick out his eyes. The Iroquois women and

children shall dance around him, and laugh till his eyes are gone."

This was interesting information to the individual referred to, but it affected him little. He had heard too many such threats before.

"Lena-Wingo is cunning as the serpent that crawls in the grass," continued the Iroquois, who were dissecting him in his own hearing.

"You do not hear him move when he comes for his prey, or steals away from the warriors that are hunting him."

"But Brandt, the great chieftain, has sworn to take the scalp of Lena-Wingo, and he will do it, unless the traitor runs away from so great a warrior, as Brandt says he has run when he heard that he was hunting for him."

If ever there was an angry Indian, that one was Lena-Wingo, when he heard these words. The thought of his running away from any one through fear was a little more than he could stand with composure; and those who were crouching around him in breathless stillness were surprised to hear him shift his position and breathe hard, as though struggling to suppress his emotions. Could they have seen his face at that moment, distorted as it was by passion, they

would have been frightened at his appearance. His hand clutched his knife and he was on the point of stealing toward the warrior who had uttered the irritating untruth, when he seemed to gain the mastery of himself—aided no doubt by the fact that at the same instant his quick ear caught the sound of a paddle, so faint that no one else heard it. He was on the alert in a second, for a scheme flashed through his mind with the quickness of lightning.

The faint noise showed that several new-comers had arrived on the scene, and naturally a change in the current of conversation followed. The wish of Lena-Wingo was to learn where these later arrivals came from—whether from the other shore or whether they were prowling up and down the bank, where they were now grouped. To the whites, who could hear every word uttered, the talk of course was incomprehensible; but the loudness of the tones, as well as the rapidity and general jangle, led them to believe they were angry about something that had taken or had failed to take place, and that had produced a quarrel between them. Such was the fact, and Lena-Wingo listened to the high words with the hope that they would lead to blows, in which

there would be a good chance of the one who had slurred his courage receiving his deserts.

Those in the canoe, it seemed, had been stealing up and down the shore, on the alert to detect the departure of the fugitives, but, from some cause or other, failed to do their duty, and they must have been quite away off at the time the Mohawk put out his awkward scow. The party on shore were angry because of the failure, which was certainly a discreditable one, and they were very ready to accuse their comrades of being "squaws" on the war-path. The accused were equally ready to charge the others with being "old women" for permitting the whites to land under their noses, and to reach cover again. It would be hard to say which of the companies was most to blame, and, as is the rule at such times, each berated the other all the more on that account. The prospect was promising for a deadly quarrel; but one or two in the party appeared to be cool-headed, and they managed to quiet the rising storm, much to the regret of the listening Mohawk.

It being clear to all the Iroquois that Lena-Wingo was too cunning for them, although he had failed in carrying his charge across the Susquehanna, it was plain that all his enemies could

do was to fix upon a plan to retrieve their own slip. And so, in full hearing of the leader of the fugitives, they discussed their different schemes. Lena-Wingo was not long in learning that there were plenty of his enemies watching both sides of the river, and that it was to be an undertaking of extreme difficulty for him to cross with his friends. This did not lessen his determination, but rather strengthened it, and he inwardly resolved that he himself would place his three companions on the southeastern shore, if Colonel Butler had his whole force of Indians and Tories arranged along the bank to prevent it!

The consultation between the Iroquois lasted all of half an hour, by which time they had decided what to do. They would all land and scatter up and down the river's margin, thus covering as much ground as possible, and watch for the moment when the whites would come out of their cover again. In other words, they meant to patrol the beach so vigilantly that it would be out of the power of the fugitives to leave their hiding-place without detection and capture.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### DIAMOND CUT DIAMOND.

ALL that could be done for a time by the fugitives was to maintain their position and remain as quiet as the grave until the Indians moved from their immediate vicinity. The prowling Iroquois were keen-witted, and although they may have been careless at first, yet they were on the lookout for the slightest indication of their enemies. Consequently, the least movement at that time would have been pretty sure to tell them that the whites, whom they would suppose were hiding somewhere in the woods, were really close at hand, and within their power. Every one of the fugitives realized this, and did not stir while the consultation was going on.

By some means or other—Ned could never explain how—he had reached out his hand, at the moment they took these positions, and grasped that of Rosa Minturn. It seemed to have been one of those instinctive actions that are natural under certain peculiar circumstances. And

so, during the better part of an hour, he enjoyed the sweet pleasure of feeling that delicate little hand nestling within his own.

At last, when the council of war was finished, the soft rustling among the leaves and undergrowth showed that the Iroquois were engaged in carrying out the programme they had just arranged among themselves. They were separating, and the danger now was that in leaving the spot they would stumble upon the whites themselves who were so near them. Nothing could be done to lessen this danger on the part of the fugitives, the only thing remaining for them being to continue the deathlike stillness until the peril was gone. Lena-Wingo was well satisfied that the Iroquois did not suspect the proximity of the whites, for the act of taking refuge so near their enemies was scarcely to be expected. They would not look, therefore, for them in such a place, and it was a matter of accident or providential interference that would carry the Iroquois beyond without learning of the presence of the fugitives. All the latter—even Rosa herself—understood this danger, and the succeeding few minutes were exceedingly trying.

The faint, catlike motion of the redskins proved they were very close, and likely to come closer any second; and if they happened to turn to the left but a few feet, it was sure to precipitate the collision that must be disastrous to the patriots. More than once Ned Clinton was certain a warrior was crouching so near him that he could touch him by reaching out his hand. The young scout was possibly correct in his surmise, for Rosa, who was next to him, was equally sure of the presence of an enemy, the supposition, in her case, extending even further. Her eyes were fixed upon the spot where she believed she could detect a dark form stealing along on the ground, so near that she fancied he must touch her dress. If she could see the Indian, she knew the eyes of the warrior were keen enough to discover her presence, from which some idea of the painful nature of her situation may be ascertained.

The senses of the girl were preternaturally acute, and still more, she was no less convinced that she could hear the breathing of the savage as he crept slowly forward. Fortunately for her, this fearful strain upon her nerves could last but a few minutes. If the Indian should come to a halt, she would take it as evidence that he had

discovered the presence of the fugitives, and she would give the alarm to her friends, but so long as he kept moving, ever so slowly, there was cause to hope he was unaware of how close he was to the prize for which they were hunting. The dark form gradually passed from view, and a few minutes later the straining vision of Rosa was unable to discover anything to excite alarm, although her ears, for several minutes after, apprised her that some of the dreaded figures were still making their way through the undergrowth dangerously near to her and her friends.

It was, perhaps, a half hour more from the conclusion of the conference of the Iroquois that they got so far away from the spot that the fugitives felt as though the peril had lifted so that they could venture to draw a deep breath and move a cramped limb. However, all waited a while longer before they dared speak in the most cautious whisper, it being considered the duty of the whites to wait until Lena-Wingo took the initiative. Suddenly, in the gloom, it was noticed that the tall Mohawk was standing perfectly erect, as though looking at something in the direction of the river. He held this singular position a few minutes, and then knelt to the earth and applied

his ear to the ground. This was one of his favorite methods when in the immediate vicinity of a foe, and it rarely failed to add to his knowledge of the movements of his enemies. While he was thus occupied, his friends patiently waited until he should be through and ready to direct them what to do. It did not take him long; for, according to the plans he had heard agreed upon, every minute only added to the difficulty of the task he had taken upon himself.

"Stay here," he whispered, his words being the first uttered since they crouched down in this spot. "Lena-Wingo go way—soon come back—don't make noise."

Every one wondered what the errand could be that should take the Mohawk away at this critical moment, and Rosa ventured to ask him.

"Why do you leave us, Lena-Wingo, when there is danger all around?"

"Won't go far—Lena-Wingo soon be back—stay right here."

"We've been staying now till we're tired of it, and if you can find other quarters, I'm sure I will be better satisfied, for one."

"Soon do so," responded the scout, and without any more explanation he began a cautious

withdrawal from their presence. All were desirous of knowing what he was after, and they watched him as well as they could. This, of course, was only for an instant, but it was long enough to see that he was going in the direction of the river, from which they had retreated in so much haste. This fact led Clinton to suspect the true errand of the Mohawk the instant he started. He said nothing of his belief to his friends, however, as he had no wish to make a blunder, and the truth would soon become apparent. All were so impressed with the gravity of the situation, that only a few syllables passed between them during the absence of their leader.

As the Indian was not to be seen the three listened with the keenest attention, hoping to gain something of the purpose of the Indian. But the silence could not have been more profound had they been the only living creatures within a thousand miles. They could detect the soft flow of the Susquehanna, only a few yards from where they were hiding in the undergrowth. Once, too, the sound of a rifle broke upon their ears, but it seemed to be a full mile away, in the depths of the forest, and gave them no alarm, its only effect being to make the solemn stillness more solemn

and impressive, and to inspire a feeling of loneliness that was almost painful. Once or twice a ripple of the water was heard, such as might be supposed to come from the movement of an enemy stealing through the current, but each of the three knew it was not caused by friend or foe. They had noticed the same thing many a time before, and knew it was caused by a drooping branch or projecting root, acted upon by the sluggish current which caused it to dip in and out of the stream.

And so that which might have excited apprehension in another caused no alarm on the part of those whose experience in the woods had taught them better. At the end of ten minutes, perhaps, Ned Clinton detected a slight rustle at his side, and turning his head to learn the cause, found that Lena-Wingo had returned.

## CHAPTER XV.

### A DELICATE AND DANGEROUS TASK.

WITHOUT using the broken language of the Mohawk scout, his mission may be explained. While the conference between the Iroquois was under way, he detected sounds that told him a canoe had arrived among them—confirmed immediately after by the sound of the quarrel already referred to. The instant he became aware of this, he resolved to obtain possession of the boat and appropriate it to his own use. Every reason urged him to do this. One of the most powerfully exciting causes was the wish—natural to the white as well as the red man—to outwit his enemies. To capture their canoe would be a brilliant winding up of the shrewd escape he had made from the parties on the water and land. Besides this, it had become plain that the only way to get across the Susquehanna was by using a craft equal in every respect to those employed by his enemies.

To venture out again in the scow would be to surrender to the Iroquois, and, as sharp as was the Mohawk, he could not but wonder that they were enabled, as it was, to get back after putting out from shore, with all the chances so against them. He supposed the redmen would leave the boat lying where it was, while they scattered up and down the shore to keep watch for the fugitives, should they attempt to repeat the embarkation. As the scow was moored near to where the canoe was drawn up, it was to be expected that the Iroquois would hold that place and its vicinity under close watch. This rendered the task of the Mohawk one of the most difficult in the world, and all the more relished on that account. Suffice it to say that he succeeded in reaching the spot, where he found one of the best canoes of his experience resting lightly against the bank. A further examination of the craft told the Mohawk that the boat was his own, having been stolen from a place up-stream where he had left it, not suspecting it was in danger.

Lena-Wingo was rather pleased than otherwise to learn this, for it was proof that, if he could secure possession of the little vessel—

abundantly able to contain all the party—he would have the one of all others which he could manage with his own consummate skill. The paddle was there, only awaiting a claimant. But in making his reconnoissance, Lena-Wingo ascertained that an Iroquois sentinel was stationed within a dozen feet, where he was using his eyes and ears as only a redskin knows how to use those organs. It was necessary to get the canoe from beneath his nose before there was any prospect of escape, and the question was as to how this should be done.

The Mohawk, with his usual perception, saw that the boat could not be entered at the point where it now lay, and he so informed his friends. His plan was to move it some twenty feet or more down-stream, where it would be beyond the range of the sentinel's vision. That accomplished, he looked upon the rest as a small matter. He instructed them, therefore, to steal as quietly as they could for about the distance named down-stream, and there await him. This being understood, they began the cautious movement, while he went back to the still more difficult task.

It was an easy matter for the three whites to do as they were bid without betraying themselves, and it was done in perfect silence, after which they resumed their waiting, watching, and listening. When Lena-Wingo reached the river-side again, he found the Iroquois at his station, where he would be likely to detect the first design upon the canoe. Then how was the latter to be used by the red scout? There was a method that would have suggested itself to any one. That was the very obvious plan of stealing up to the unconscious sentinel, and putting him out of the way so effectually that he could never disturb them more.

The reason why the warrior hesitated to employ the method which his enemies would have been only too glad to use against him was in obedience to that strange forbearance in his composition, and which rendered him reluctant to shed blood, unless in legitimate warfare. There was not a particle of doubt that he could have stolen up to the guard and dispatched him before he could make a single outcry or apprise his companions of what was going on. This would leave the coast clear for him to take the whites aboard and use his

own leisure to reach the other shore. But the scheme he had in his mind would leave the sentinel unharmed, while its after-effect would be almost equal to death itself. This plan was to steal the canoe away without attracting the notice of the Iroquois—a proceeding which would be such a disgrace to the warrior that he was likely to fare ill at the hands of his comrades, who were exasperated over the failures already made.

His course of action being decided upon, the Mohawk went at it with his accustomed caution and promptness. His rifle had been left in the hands of Ned Clinton so that his arms were untrammeled, and he entered the water a short distance below where the boat was lying against the bank. Fortunately, the stream was deeper than he anticipated, rising to his waist when he was within a yard of the land. This gave him the facility he desired, as by stooping he was able to hide all but his head, which was so placed that the canoe, resting high upon the surface, was brought between him and the sentinel. This concealed him from the sight of the warrior, and gave him the shelter so indispensable. It then required but a minute to make

his way through the water to the stern of the canoe, which he cautiously grasped.

All depended upon the skill with which he managed this part of the scheme. If the Iroquois should suspect any such attempt, the suspicion was sure to defeat it. After placing his hand upon the rear gunwale, he paused for fully a minute and listened. The stillness remained undisturbed, and it looked as if the way were clear for the daring attempt. At the very instant that Lena-Wingo began to exert a gently increasing pressure, his keen sense of hearing told him the sentinel was moving, and the scout paused before the frail boat had yielded to the force.

The Iroquois was approaching the canoe, as if he suspected mischief.

The boat itself was no quieter than the Mohawk, as he listened to the advance of his enemy. He could tell what the latter was doing as well as if he were looking directly at him. He knew he was picking his way to where the boat was lying, and a minute after, had paused within arm's length of the same. There he stood while the Mohawk awaited his next move.

If the sentinel should step into the craft, it would show that he intended to look over the stern, in which case the Mohawk held himself ready to sink below the surface, coming up so far out in the stream that he would be invisible. But if the Iroquois really suspected any such act upon the part of the great enemy of his tribe, his fears were removed by the utter silence. After waiting a little longer, he returned to his former position with the same caution and silence as before. Lena-Wingo hardly paused until he was out of the way, when he drew a little harder upon the stern, and felt it slowly yielding to the force. A few more minutes of undisturbed action, and he was sure of having the canoe just where he wanted it!

## CHAPTER XVI.

### IROQUOIS AGAINST IROQUOIS.

SLOWLY and evenly, as the shadow steals along the face of the dial, did the Mohawk draw the canoe from its resting place on the dark bank of the river. One might have stood and gazed directly at it for ten minutes without suspecting what was going on, it being only when he compared its situation with what it was a short time before that the difference was likely to be noticed. If the Iroquois sentinel should be on the alert for some such strategy on the part of the Mohawk, who was known to all as one of the most cunning of his race, it would seem that the trick was impossible. But there was every reason to hope that he did not suspect it, as his action in returning to his first station after the brief examination, showed, and the Mohawk acted on this belief.

The retrograde movement, once started, was not abated till the boat was drawn clear of the shore and floated free in the water. Then, with-

out shifting its position as regarded the bank itself, the motion was continued down the current, until some eight or a dozen feet were passed. The hopes of Lena-Wingo were high, for the fact that the sentinel had failed to discover what was going on under his very eyes indicated that his suspicions were turned in another direction. Even should he detect the change of position on the part of the boat, there was reason to hope he would attribute it to the action of the current, for the motion of the craft was made to imitate such progression by the cunning Mohawk.

Something like half the distance was accomplished, when Lena-Wingo made a change in his own position. Instead of remaining at the stern of the canoe as he had done before, he changed to the side, so that he could appear at the front or rear the moment the necessity arose. The reason for this step was that he had progressed so far that he was determined there should be no failure. The experiment had in his eyes been an assured success. If the Iroquois should appear and attempt to interfere, Lena-Wingo would meet him half way, and dispose of him for all time to come. Fortunately for

the sentinel, he seemed to be unusually obtuse that night, and allowed the daring scheme to be carried out under his very nose, without objection on his part.

The motion of the canoe was not hastened in the least, but continued in the same steady, uninterrupted manner till the point was reached where the fugitives were anxiously awaiting the success of the plan of the scout. The first indication the latter received of what was done, and the approach of the Mohawk, was his cautious "Sh!" uttered just loud enough to reach their ears. Not one of the three had been able to detect the slightest sound that indicated what the scout was doing, so skillfully had he conducted the whole affair. Ned returned the almost inaudible exclamation to apprise their friend that they were expecting him. A minute later, the Mohawk appeared among them with the silence of a shadow.

"All here?" was his rather curious question.

"All here," replied Ned.

"Boat ready—come along—make no noise."

The four stole forward after the manner of those who knew their lives depended upon perfect silence, and they succeeded in reaching the side of

the stream without alarming the sentinel, who still held a position dangerously near the fugitives. Rosa was the first to enter, and she took her place in the extreme end, there being no difference between the bow and stern of such a craft. Immediately after her came Ned, who placed himself as close to her as possible. Then followed the Mohawk, paddle in hand, Jo Minturn locating himself in the prow, so as to give the Mohawk the best position in which to manage the craft, and to "trim ship," as the expression goes.

This was as the red scout wanted matters arranged; and when he grasped the paddle it was with a greater confidence than he had felt at any time during the night. But he had entered upon one of the most perilous attempts conceivable, and he was sure the trick would be detected within the succeeding five minutes. In fact, it was discovered in less than that time; for he had no more than fairly dipped the oar in the water than he heard a low, vibrating whoop from the spot where the Mohawk was stationed. That sound, as Lena-Wingo well knew, meant danger, and was intended as a signal for his companions to hasten to the spot—a signal that was sure to be promptly obeyed when more than a half dozen

were on the alert and waiting for just such a call. It was so distinct that the whites accepted it as evidence that their flight was discovered, and pursuit was sure to follow.

Rosa was much frightened, for she felt they had gone so far that they could not return, and it was a question whether they would reach the other side of the river in safety, or be captured on the stream itself, with the probabilities in favor of the latter. Everything depended upon the skill and sagacity of the Mohawk, who showed himself equal to the occasion. At the same instant that the sound mentioned reached his ear, he dipped his paddle deep into the water, and sent the canoe, with one powerful sweep, several rods down the bank, keeping so close to the land that the leaves of the overhanging limbs brushed the heads of the occupants, and compelled them to duck their heads. This done, he allowed the boat to rest, while he listened to learn what his enemies were doing. The sounds that fell upon his ear told him the flight of the boat had been detected, and there could be no doubt that the whole force of Iroquois would be engaged in the hunt in the next few minutes. Without speaking, he dipped the paddle again, and the canoe was

driven as far as before down the stream; but, in this instance, he did not permit it to rest, continuing the process until he had gone fully a hundred yards from his starting point. This done, he considered he had reached the point where he could make a change in the direction, and he headed boldly out into the river, aiming for the other shore, which had been their destination so long, and which he was determined to make this time.

The skill with which he controlled and swayed the ashen blade was wonderful. The night was still, without a breath of air stirring the tree-tops, but the instant the boat left the cover of the bank, the faces of the whites were swept as if by a gale. At that rate, the other shore would be made in a very short time, and the action of the Mohawk indicated that such was his purpose, guided, perhaps, by the hope that it might be done before the alarm could reach those grouped on that side.

But they were as vigilant as the ones who had made the discovery of the flight, and a whoop that came from some point ahead warned the Mohawk that the passage was not to be as uneventful as he expected. The worst of it was,

the reply heard by all in the canoe came from immediately in front, so that they had only to keep on in the direction in which they were going to run straight into ambush. At this time the fugitives were near the middle of the Susquehanna, the night being so dark that they were invisible to any upon either shore, and they were hardly liable to discovery unless some of their enemies should start out upon the river in quest of them. It was obviously the duty of the Mohawk to hold that position, and move up or down stream, as might seem best. The whites supposed he would continue down the current, but, to their surprise, he headed straight against it, and sped upward with astonishing speed.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### AT LAST!

Up to that time the fugitives, although steadily drifting down stream, seemed to keep directly in the way of the parties whom they were seeking to avoid; for, no matter where they headed, or at what point they aimed, they were sure to find some of the Iroquois waiting to receive them. It looked, indeed, as if the redmen were shrewd enough to make allowance for this fact, judging from the way the attempt turned out in each instance. It was the purpose of Lena-Wingo, in heading up stream, to break through this chain that seemed thrown around them, and there appeared no other way of doing it.

Neither to the right nor left turned he, but swinging his paddle powerfully and noiselessly, he drove the deeply-laden canoe against the current with a force that sent the water foaming from the prow, the soft wash and rustle of the current being the only noise that marked this bird-like flight. Going at such a rate, he did not

need much time to pass over considerable space, and he was still forging ahead in the same swift fashion when he caught the sound of another paddle. This, then, was proof that the pursuers did not care to wait till the fugitives should land, but had sent some of their warriors out to search for them.

Lena-Wingo recognized the sound as coming from the shore which he meant to reach, but at some distance below them, which fact was proof of his wisdom in taking the course he did. He kept up his flight without the least cessation, and had every reason to hope that the Iroquois were outwitted, when he was more angered than alarmed by hearing the sweep of still another paddle—this time coming from a point above where he was, but on the same side of the river as the former. The Iroquois were making the hunt hotter than he anticipated. The Mohawk stopped paddling and looked around in the gloom that shut down on every hand, for there was cause to expect the appearance of other boats, and it was necessary to watch where his own craft was going.

"We have got along very well so far," said Jo, who, not having noticed the evidence of their pur-

suit, supposed their friend had merely paused to take his bearings.

"Pretty well," assented the Mohawk, speaking in the lowest key and scanning the stream in every direction.

"Do you think they know where we are?" continued the young scout.

"Know we on river—they find us."

Upon hearing these alarming words, Rosa Minturn straightened up and peered anxiously about, impelled thereto by the manner, more than the utterance, of the leader.

"I think I hear the sound of another paddle," she said in a whisper, turning inquiringly to the Indian.

"Yes, two boats on water; looking for us; maybe find us."

"In which direction is this last one that Rosa noticed, and which I also hear?" asked Ned Clinton, in the same guarded tone.

Lena-Wingo answered by pointing toward the shore a little above a spot opposite where they were lying in the stream.

"Right there—he go 'bout—look for us."

"Yes, and I see him, too!" added Rosa, the next instant.

"There he come!" added the Mohawk, making the discovery at the same moment. "Stoop down, quick! must not see you! Put head low down, so can't see you—make no noise."

His command was obeyed at once. The other canoe having approached near enough to be seen itself, was sure to discover the boat. The heads of Ned Clinton and of the brother and sister were instantly lowered, so that they could not be seen from the outside, and they waited with throbbing hearts for the issue. The occupants of the strange boat descried the Mohawk almost as soon as he saw them, and as he expected they headed straight toward him. The action of Lena-Wingo depended for success on its very boldness, and he went at it with as much coolness and self-possession as if failure was impossible.

Lena-Wingo, being a Mohawk, was also an Iroquois, as much as if he were a member of the Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, or Seneca branch of the powerful confederation known as the Six Nations. His intention was to assume the character of a genuine enemy of the white race, and to answer whatever questions were put to him in a way to mislead their foes. Still, this trick

had been played so often by him, that it required all the skill of which he was master. It was necessary also that he should not permit the strange canoe to come too near, else the deception would be detected.

As the boat drew nigh, he kept up a slight movement of his paddle, which caused the craft to glide in a slanting direction from the other.

"Where are the pale faces?" asked one of the four Iroquois who sat in the new boat, while the couple were separated by two or three rods.

"How should Magawan know?" asked the Mohawk in return, in a surly voice, as if angry that the question was put to him. "The warriors on the land are squaws, and they do not know how to look for the traitor and the pale faces. They have let them go again."

These words were spoken in the Indian tongue, the accent as clear as that of those who addressed him. There was truth and sense in what Lena-Wingo said, for it was this very suspicion that the Indians were not doing as well as they should that led to the canoe being launched from the other side.

"But they called to us that Lena-Wingo was on the river in a canoe," said one of the new-

comers, sidling up toward the Mohawk, who was as cautiously sidling away from him.

"They spoke the truth if they said the pale faces have gone off again. I am looking for them."

"Why does Magawan look for them this way?"

"To find them," was the quick response. "Are you searching for them?"

"We have been sent out by Taunwaso, the great chief of the Oneidas, to find Lena-Wingo, the traitor, and the whites."

"Why don't you find them, then? If they are not here they are somewhere else. Go there and find them."

And, as if he were tired of the conversation, the Mohawk dipped his paddle lower than before, and deliberately paddled away from his questioners. The surliness of the repulse made it quite effective, and the four Iroquois sat for several minutes as if undecided what they ought to do after such an interview.

Lena-Wingo knew that he was in great peril, for he believed from the first that the others were not satisfied with the appearance of things. He shaped his action on the supposition that

they would speedily detect the trick and start in pursuit. He kept up the river until he had gone far enough to screen his movements, when he made a sharp bend in the course he was following, and headed for the bank on his right. There was another canoe that was also hunting for them, as will be remembered, and, in case these two should meet, the whole truth would become known at once. Lena-Wingo was not mistaken in his suspicion that he heard the two boats at the same time, showing that they were not only very near, but drawing nearer every minute.

While the Mohawk was paddling in this fashion, striving to make his landing-place as far up stream as he could, he knew the two canoes had joined and that the hottest kind of a hunt was on foot. But there was not a great deal of water between him and the shore, and he quickly made it still less.

"Raise head now—make no noise!" he said, as the water foamed again from the bow of the canoe.

As the fugitives obeyed, they saw they were close to the bank, and the limbs of the overhanging trees were within their reach. Lena-Wingo

kept along the shore for some distance further, when one turn of the paddle sent the canoe in so sharply against the bank that it stuck fast, and all were forced forward by the sudden stoppage. The Susquehanna was crossed at last.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### THE SOUTHEASTERN SHORE.

THE Mohawk felt that he had accomplished a great feat in the taking of the canoe before the very eyes of the Iroquois sentinel set to watch it and in successfully eluding the pursuit of the others. But the danger was not yet disposed of, for, at the moment the fugitives stepped from the canoe, the other two crafts were in swift pursuit, the occupants having learned the trick played upon them by the wily Mohawk. Although the canoe of the latter was invisible, yet they were well aware of the direction taken, and could not avoid a pretty accurate guess as to the destination of the occupants. Thus it was that they headed almost in a direct line for the precise point where the fugitives landed, and were not much behind them in reaching the spot.

The majority of persons, in making such a flight, would have started for the depths of the forest without an instant's delay, but the Mohawk perpetrated a little piece of strategy

which proved of inestimable benefit to him and his friends. At the moment they stepped from the boat he seized the latter in a strong grasp and gave it a powerful impulse that sent it far out and down the stream. Although their pursuers were coming up rapidly, yet they were not quite in sight, and in the brief interval that must elapse before they could catch a glimpse of the empty craft, the purpose of Lena-Wingo was perfected. An exultant whoop from one of the pursuing canoes told of the discovery of the drifting boat, whose occupants had effected a landing but a second or two before. But the craft which caused the outcry was several rods below the spot where it had touched the land, and the fugitives themselves were still further removed from the water's edge, stealing along in the darkness of the woods from the Iroquois who were hastily gathering to the spot, apprised by a dozen signals of what had taken place.

The Indian, telling his friends to keep on the move and make no noise, remained in the rear, to learn what his foes intended to do. He saw the two canoes halt for a moment beside the empty boat, as if they wished to make sure that

it held none of the party for whom they were hunting, and then they shot their own craft in to the shore, leaving the other to drift aimlessly down the river. The two which struck the bank did so at a point something more than a rod below where the other landing had taken place. There they met quite a number of others who came down from the woods, where they had been signaling to and answering calls from those across the stream. Then followed a wrangle, with the same prospect of conflict that occurred at no great time before. The provocation in the latter instance was much greater than in the former, for the fugitives had slipped through the hands of the Iroquois in the most exasperating manner. But there seemed, also, to be the identical level-headed ones, who were backed by an authority sufficient to compel the fiery warriors to keep the peace. The storm of passion subsided almost as soon as it rose.

Lena-Wingo was desirous of learning what the party, as a whole, would do, now that it was clear that the fugitives had succeeded in crossing the Susquehanna in spite of all the preparations to prevent it; but the warriors gathered around were so numerous and began to spread out in

such a fashion, that his position became untenable, and he found it no easy matter to get out of his rather uncomfortable quarters and to rejoin his companions, who were awaiting him some little distance off. All were in high spirits over the success of the strategy of the Mohawk, but they could not shut their eyes to the fact that in one sense they had crossed the Rubicon. As there was no turning back, they must press forward.

With many whispered congratulations over the discomfiture of the Iroquois, the fugitives hurried forward until they reached the spot where they felt free to say what they chose without danger of being heard by their pursuers. The Mohawk was at the head of the little party and conducted them to the edge of a large clear space, where grain had been growing. As there was every convenience for sitting down and enjoying a comfortable rest, they paused, and for the first time that night felt the pleasure of knowing that there was nothing to be feared from the Tories and Indians.

"Lena-Wingo, you're a brick!" exclaimed Jo Minturn, taking the liberty of slapping the grim

Indian a resounding blow on the back. "I couldn't have done that thing better if I had taken the contract myself."

The guide did not resent this familiarity, though at times it would have offended him.

"Iroquois get mad," he replied, with his usual grin. "When Iroquois get mad, then Lena-Wingo get glad."

"Yes; I suspect you were inclined that way, from what I've heard of your dealings with those people."

"Recollect that we haven't reached Wilkesbarre yet," put in Rosa," and it isn't wise to rejoice until we're well out of the woods. It seems to me that the hardest part of the work still lies before us."

"Gal speak right," assented the Mohawk, with an approving nod. "Iroquois all round—look everywhere."

"It strikes me that is what they've been doing for the past few days," added Jo, who was not to be discouraged. "But they haven't made a success of it, so far."

"It seems to me," said Ned, addressing Jo, but meaning his words for Lena-Wingo, "that when

the approaches to Wilkesbarre are guarded so closely it will be wiser for us to go somewhere else."

This scheme had been freely discussed by the two young scouts, and they had arranged that it should be introduced in this manner for the purpose of learning the views of the Mohawk.

"I have thought of the same thing," replied Jo, as if it were the first time it had been mentioned in his hearing. "And it does look as if it is risking a great deal to push right through the woods in this way, when there are hundreds of other paths by which we can escape the Iroquois."

"It would be a good trick on Colonel Butler, when he has arranged his redskins and Tories so that he is sure we will walk right into their hands, for him to learn that we have gone somewhere else."

"It can be done," said Jo, carrying out the plan fixed upon some time before. "We have already shown them that there is no use of their trying to stop us, when we have made up our minds to do something,—I mean Lena-Wingo more than us,—and so we can afford to retire and leave them to themselves."

"If they can't stop us," said Rosa, "what, then, is the use of acting as though they had done so?"

"See here," said her brother, turning rather sharply, "I thought Ned and I had arranged without your help."

Not one of the three imagined that Lena-Wingo was quick enough to take the cue from what was thus said by Jo, but such was the case. The Mohawk held his peace and listened, but he was not deceived.

## CHAPTER XIX.

### THE MOHAWK OBJECTS.

"I FORGOT," Rosa answered, laughingly; "but you must try to put a little more logic in what you say."

"Logic!" repeated the young man. "What does a woman know about logic? However, we will discuss that some other time. Just now I'm busy with the new idea of Ned's. There's a good deal in what you said," he added, addressing his companion again, "and the more I consider it, the more favorably am I inclined. We can continue up the Susquehanna till we go so far that there's no danger from the Indians, and, when we believe the way is clear, we can come back. Colonel Butler is not going to stay long at Wyoming, for he dare not. He don't know how soon there will be a gathering of the forces that will swoop down on him, and he'll get out while he can. Consequently all we have to do is to remain invisible until he leaves."

"Nothing easier in the world," was the prompt remark of Ned, backing up his friend. "Jack, here, can keep out of their reach with no trouble. It would be a great relief to your parents, too, to know that Rosa is not running such a risk as it will be to try to get into the fort at Wilkesbarre."

"How angry Butler will be!" exclaimed Jo, with as much zest as if he saw the villain tearing his hair on account of his disappointment.

The plan of the young scouts was pretty well unfolded by this time, so that both were satisfied the Mohawk knew what the opinions were, and was able to give his own for the asking. Calm consideration of the proposition of the friends and companions must lead one to speak of them favorably. Colonel Butler knew that the fugitives were aiming for Wilkesbarre, and had taken every precaution to secure their capture. Nothing could be more certain than that they could not enter, nor even approach within range of the fortifications of that place, without encountering some of these redmen or Tories. It would seem, therefore, that the most foolhardy thing for the whites to do was to persevere in the effort to reach that place in the face of such

danger. There were plenty of other directions that could be taken, and the plan suggested by the youths in their brief conversation was only one of the many that suggested themselves whenever they thought of the subject. Jo Minturn, believing their wishes had been sufficiently uncovered by what had been said, now addressed himself directly to the Mohawk:

"Lena-Wingo, you heard what we said; now I should like to know what you think of it."

"Nonsense."

There it was! an opinion about which there could be no misunderstanding. There was enough moonlight for the young scouts to see each other's faces, and they stared in blank dismay. The next thing they did was to look at Rosa, who was trying hard to restrain her laughter.

"You ought to be satisfied," she said, "without scowling at me that way; you asked Lena-Wingo what he thought of your plans, which you and Ned fixed up between you, and he told you in one word."

"That's the trouble; he didn't take quite as many words as we would have liked to hear. If he had talked the whole thing over, we would

have gained a chance to argue, and perhaps convince him."

The Mohawk, as a matter of course, heard all that passed between his friends, and he seemed to think the time had come for him to put in an additional word or two.

"All nonsense," he said, by way of introducing the subject. "The Iroquois say Lena-Wingo shan't go to Wilkesbarre—all lie—Lena-Wingo *will* go there—Iroquois say Lena-Wingo shan't take gal there—all lie—*will* take gal there—Iroquois say Lena-Wingo run away from Brandt—all lie—*never* run away."

These broken sentences contained the secret of the Mohawk's course of action. It had now become a matter of pride with him, and since the Tories and Indians had made such elaborate preparations to prevent the fugitives reaching Wilkesbarre, he was fired by the resolve that the lines should be passed through, and the maiden placed safely behind the fortifications at that town. In making this determination he did not forget the interests of Rosa. He knew what he was doing, and was sure that he could accomplish it with safety to her, though he felt there

was a possible doubt about running the two young men through the environing danger.

He saw, as well as his companions, that the plan proposed by them was attended with little danger, but when a scheme was in that shape it lost all attraction for him. To escape the Iroquois by dodging or running was attended, in his estimation, with a certain ignominy that made it repulsive to him. He was naturally elated in reflecting how neatly he had just outwitted them, and that fact was not calculated to lessen his confidence in his own prowess.

"Well, Lena-Wingo," said Jo, when the ripple of fun had died out, "you seem to have made up your mind on the subject, and I suppose there is no use of arguing with you."

"No use," was the response of the Indian.

"If that's the case," added Ned, "we may as well dismiss it, and find out what is to be done."

"Go to Wilkesbarre," said the Mohawk, as if he were determined there should be no misunderstanding of his position.

"I understand that, but the night must be pretty well gone, and it won't do for us to sit

here for two or three days, so I would like tc know what the next step is to be."

Ned Clinton expressed the wish that was on the tongue of his two friends, and they listened eagerly to the reply. The Indian straightened up his form, so that his slim, tall figure looked slimmer and taller than ever, and he took a minute or two to gaze into the gloom before answering.

"We go back yonder," he said, pointing in the direction of the mountains which form the south-eastern boundary of the valley of Wyoming. "We go yonder—stay there—find way to go to Wilkesbarre."

The whites correctly interpreted this as meaning that he believed it prudent, in view of the fact that the direct approach to the place was so closely watched, to use some strategy to secure an entrance, the point in his mind being merely to beat the Iroquois, without considering the means by which it was done. In the range of mountains stretching to the south-east of the valley, where the Mohawk had taken Rosa many a time on a hunt, were numerous places offering secure hiding for the fugitives from the hunt of the enemies. It was the inten-

tion of Lena-Wingo to conduct his friends to that neighborhood, as he explained further, and then look over and watch the ground so carefully that he could commit no mistake when he did make his move. So soon as he should see the way clear, he would take Rosa to the shelter before the Tories and Indians could learn what he was trying to do.

Lena-Wingo spoke with so much quiet confidence that his listeners could not but feel something of the same spirit. As for Rosa, she favored his plan, and so expressed herself. The Indian had made his resolve before that, but he was as firm as the rock of Gibraltar, reinforced by her endorsement.

## CHAPTER XX.

### THE LONGEST WAY HOME.

THE little party of fugitives occupied the position on the margin of the grain-field for an hour or so longer, discussing the past and arranging their plans for the immediate future. As they had the time, the Mohawk took pains to explain some of his movements made on the other side of the river, and also when they were engaged in stealing across, which movements none of the party understood at the time. It was necessary at this stage of the proceedings for all to comprehend as fully as possible the plans that were now to be followed in the game, where the stakes were life itself.

Lena-Wingo assured them that with the coming of daylight the Iroquois would use every exertion to capture them, as it had also become a matter of pride on their part to outwit the Mohawk, with whom they were really making the fight. Some of them would hunt and follow the trail of the party, and every approach to the

Wilkesbarre fortifications would be guarded by their best warriors. Such being the case, Ned and Jo were more convinced than ever that their plan of giving up this method was wise, but they said nothing, for they knew it was useless.

While they were talking the growing light in the eastern horizon apprised them that day was near, and that it was unsafe to wait longer. All instantly rose to their feet, looking upon the face of the warrior for direction as to what they were to do. Before he could speak, the sound of a rifle was heard, causing a start of alarm on the part of his companions. The latter noticed that the direction of the report was from the river, and, as it seemed, from the very spot where they had left it.

"What is the meaning of that?" asked Ned. "Can it have—"

Bang! bang! bang! came several other reports in quick succession, showing that something serious was going on. Every voice was hushed, and they looked in each other's faces, and then stared at the Mohawk as if they would read the explanation in his painted countenance. At the first glance there was nothing that could give them a clue on those bronzed features, as

seen in the early light of the morning. The Indian was also listening and waiting till he could hear and learn more before saying anything. The firing lasted until it sounded as if a skirmish was going on close at hand. Could it be that a party of fugitive patriots was engaged in a fight with a lot of Tories and Indians?

When the firing had continued in a desultory way for several minutes, the whites caught the sound of whoops, showing that the redmen had a part in the trouble. The instant these cries fell on the ears of the Mohawk, his dark face lit up with a gleam of satisfaction, the expression of delight being noticed by all.

"What is it, Lena-Wingo?" asked Rosa. "Are they Iroquois and white folks that are fighting?"

"No, not that."

"What then?"

"Iroquois fighting Iroquois."

So his wish was granted, after all. The warriors had fallen into battle among themselves, with a sure benefit to the fugitives. Hence it was natural that the Mohawk, after being disappointed twice on the preceding night, should listen to the sounds of the strife with

genuine pleasure. It looked as if with the coming of daylight the Iroquois had discovered that some of their number had blundered in the hunt for the Mohawk in a way that could not be forgiven. A deadly quarrel was the result, with the certainty that more than one of their bravest warriors would bite the dust before it could be terminated, even by the chiefs and leaders themselves. The fight lasted but a short time, for it was a fierce fire, which must exhaust itself speedily for want of fuel.

The Mohawk, however, heard enough to convince him that execution had been done, and his rejoicing was not interfered with through any fear that it had been quieted down as were the other two impending disturbances. But the morning was advancing, and the hours were as precious to the fugitives as to the Iroquois. The probabilities were that the revengeful enemies would soon be on their track, and the whites had but to remain where they were a short time longer to fall into their hands.

At the moment the noise of the conflict between the Indians ceased, Lena-Wingo, who had maintained the standing position from the first, moved off in a southerly course, looking

around as a signal for his companions to follow him. They were heading toward the range of mountains which bounded the Wyoming valley on the southeast, and which loomed up dark and frowning in the gray mist of the early morning.

This route led them over cultivated ground and through woods, where it seemed to the whites they might halt and find all the shelter they could need. But the Mohawk pressed straight on, his destination being the mountains themselves. The guide of the party kept away from the cultivated portions of the valley as much as possible, for it was dangerous to approach any body of men, or the places where they were likely to be found. Lena-Wingo was in his own territory, and it was his intention to manage the business without asking for or accepting any suggestions from his friends.

The company had advanced something like a half mile when the morning was fairly upon them—another of those clear, mild summer days common to this latitude at that season of the year. They were approaching rising ground, and soon began ascending to a higher level than that which they had been treading for some time.

The Indian still stuck to the forest, for he felt a confidence in its shadows such as the open country could not afford.

While progressing in this manner it was noticed by the youths that he led them over as rough and stony paths as possible, and that at the same time he stepped as carefully as he knew how—no doubt with the purpose of hiding their tracks from the too curious Iroquois.

Lena-Wingo evinced no objections to his companions talking together as they picked their way along, provided they kept their voices below "concert pitch"—a precaution which they were sure to remember, in view of what they had passed through so recently. For all that, the Mohawk advanced with a confidence which at times resembled recklessness, and Ned Clinton more than once was on the point of remonstrating with him. But he held his peace, through fear of offending him. The journey was continued in this fashion, the party walking quite rapidly until they were well into the rising ground of the mountains, when a halt was made.

It was a good omen that the whites had been able to go thus far without encountering any

of the Iroquois, and they were not a little cheered thereby. But the fact remained—and it took somewhat from their rejoicing—that they were further from Wilkesbarre at the time of halting than they were at starting. It was because they had gone away from instead of toward their destination that accounted for their immunity from disturbance. Still, it is the longest way home which is often the surest, and the Mohawk, in conducting his companions in that direction, was only carrying out a plan which he had formed while on the other side of the Susquehanna, and of which this was but the preliminary step.

## CHAPTER XXI.

### A CURIOUS DISCOVERY.

"STAY here," said the Mohawk, as soon as they halted; "Lena-Wingo go look for Iroquois—soon be back—don't go away—don't make noise, listen—watch, don't go away."

"But suppose some of them come down upon us, Jack?" asked Ned, determined to understand the situation as fully as possible.

"Keep out way—won't come down—stay away."

"Well, if you are enough satisfied to give me a written guarantee, that's all there is about it. How long do you expect to be gone?"

"Not long—soon be back."

This was not very definite, but it was all the Mohawk would say, and without any more words he took his departure, walking back over the trail which they had been following since leaving the river.

"I can't understand why he is sure that no one will make a call on us while he is gone," said Jo

Minturn to Ned, as the three once more seated themselves, this time on a fallen tree.

"The only reason that suggests itself to me is that he believes we are so far off the track of the Iroquois that the only possibility that can lead them this way is by their discovering our trail, and if they attempt that, they will run against him, as he is going backward over it."

"That seems to be a pretty good reason, but he may miss it, nevertheless. There may not be much danger of an invasion from any other direction, and yet there's no telling, either, from what point of the compass these wretches may come."

"You ought to have explained all that," said Rosa. "I am quite sure that Lena-Wingo would be grateful for all the instruction you can give him in the ways of the woods. But you know he is so much younger than you, and has had so little experience, that you must be charitable, and not judge him too harshly."

Jo laughed and shook his head at his sister, who persisted in "touching" him up on every occasion.

"As we are to stay here indefinitely," said Ned, "there can be no harm in taking an observation and learning something for ourselves."

"How are we to do it?" asked his friend.

Ned pointed to the towering trees which stood on every hand.

"Climb up among those branches; what better outlook can one ask than he can get among those limbs?"

"What a nice target a man would be, too, if an Indian should catch sight of him!" said Rosa, as she looked up at the leaves gently swaying in the slight morning breeze. "But after what Lena-Wingo said, I don't think there's much to be feared of that, and I look upon your idea as a good one, Edward."

"If my sister considers the idea a good one," said Jo, "that settles it, and you need have no further fear."

"Of course not," was the prompt assent of Ned, who moved to the tree which he had selected as his lookout.

As there was a remote possibility that some such a contingency as the one intimated by their fair companion might occur, Jo and Rosa stationed themselves beneath the tree to guard against surprise, Jo holding his gun ready, while Ned left his own piece in the hands of Rosa, who, should the occasion arise, knew how to employ

it effectively. It was the work of a few minutes for the athletic young man to make his way to the top of the tree, which was one of the tallest in the neighborhood, and gave him the opportunity he wished. Ned remembered the words of Rosa, which, uttered in jest as they were, contained a good deal of sense. While making his way among the limbs, he frequently paused and carefully scrutinized the ground below, on the lookout for lurking Indians.

The most rigid scrutiny failed to reveal anything alarming, and reaching as high a point as was prudent, he settled himself among the luxuriant branches, and then, like the shipwrecked mariner, looked long and searchingly over the waste around him.

Peering to the northward, from his elevated perch, Ned saw the stretch of woods, cultivated fields, the broad, smoothly-flowing Susquehanna, with the faint view of the ruins of Fort Wintermoot and of Forty Fort beyond. The view was a lovely one, as seen in the clear sunlight of this summer morning, and it was hard to realize that the fair vale had been desecrated within so brief a time by the merciless white and red men, who had not yet left the valley. No wonder that the

beauties of this enchanting spot have drawn the tribute of the poets of the Old and New World.

Ned Clinton had often gazed on the attractions of his native vale, and he appreciated them always, but he restrained the admiration which he might have felt at any other time. The first glance over the extended scene failed to discover any signs of life; but when he had looked again, he detected the figure of a canoe crossing the river, the distance making it appear but a speck, while the number of occupants was indistinguishable. To the southwest, almost in the line of the Susquehanna, he observed a black cloud resting like a smirch of dirt against a clear, blue sky. This, he had no doubt, was the smoke from some conflagration of the night before.

The little primitive town of Wilkesbarre, with its rude fortifications, lay also along the bank of the river, but owing to some intervening trees of tall growth, standing close to the fort, the view in that direction was not as complete as in others. Having scanned the outer boundaries of the field, Ned attended to those portions which lay nearer to him. It was a long time before he could fix upon any spot that promised to give him information of friend or

foe. Nothing could be seen of Lena-Wingo, who was pursuing his investigations in his own way, and was not likely to return until he had accomplished something upon which to base an intelligent course of action. But by and by, as the youth was scanning a point two or three hundred yards away, his eye fell upon something which promised to give him the very knowledge he was seeking.

In an open space at the distance mentioned, he observed a large flat rock, which had nothing peculiar in its appearance, but which, it was evident, was being used by some one as a means of concealment, while he in turn took a survey of the young man in the tree. Ned was under the impression that no matter how much he played the sentinel, he was invisible to all outsiders that might be attempting to steal toward him and his friends. It happened that he glanced directly at the object at the moment that a man, whose dress showed him to be of the same race as the young scout, rose to his feet, stood a second or two, and then dropped down out of sight again. His action was such as a man would make when he suspected that some one else was trying to obtain a closer

scrutiny than was agreeable. Ned was not a little puzzled by what he witnessed. He looked down to his friends, and spoke in a careful undertone:

"Keep a sharp lookout; I have discovered something which I want to study a while."

"All right," called back Jo; "manage your end of the rope as you ought, and we'll take care of ours."

Left thus free, the sentinel devoted himself to the task of watching the movements of the stranger, and learning what his intentions were in conducting himself in the manner described.

"He can't get away from where he is without my seeing him," was the reflection of the watcher, "and if he means mischief, I shall detect it in time to prevent his hurting us."

The stranger at this period was invisible, as he must continue to be so long as he kept behind the rock; but it was hardly likely that he would stay there long.

"It may be he is some fugitive like ourselves," added young Clinton, "and he doesn't feel certain enough of our identity as yet to trust himself within reach."

## CHAPTER XXII.

### ANOTHER FUGITIVE.

At the end of five or ten minutes Ned Clinton, with his eyes fixed upon the broad, flat rock, was sure he saw the figure of a man behind it. It was only the top of his head, thrust a little above the edge of the stone, as if the stranger were seeking a view of the one who was watching him without his purpose being detected. The slouched hat and the eyes and forehead were in plain sight for a minute or two, when they sank down again and all was as before.

"If he is a friend," thought Ned, "he is very timid, or he has a queer way of showing his good will."

The distance between the two was too great for either to do anything in the way of shooting, but the youth was inclined to send a rifle shot in that direction, as a challenge for the strange craft to come out and show its colors.

He called down to Jo again, to watch for the approach of any foe, for he was compelled to

give close attention to this particular stranger, and another might steal up beneath the very tree without the one in the branches detecting his danger. In this way nearly an hour passed without any change in the situation, and the fugitives began to look for the return of the Mohawk, he having promised not to stay away long.

"I wish he would come," said the watchman, to himself, "for it wouldn't take him a great while to find out what that fellow is driving at. I don't see that I have much chance of learning without his help."

If there was any opportunity for the stranger to withdraw, Ned would have suspected the man had done so, but he was satisfied it was impossible for him to elude him in that way, and consequently he must still be behind the rock. Clinton at last grew tired and called to Jo that he was about to fire his gun, to compel the stranger to let him know who he was and what he wanted. Before doing so, he scanned the wood in his immediate vicinity, fearing that some other questionable character had stolen near enough to take a shot at him.

He was relieved, however, when after the closest search he was unable to find any cause for

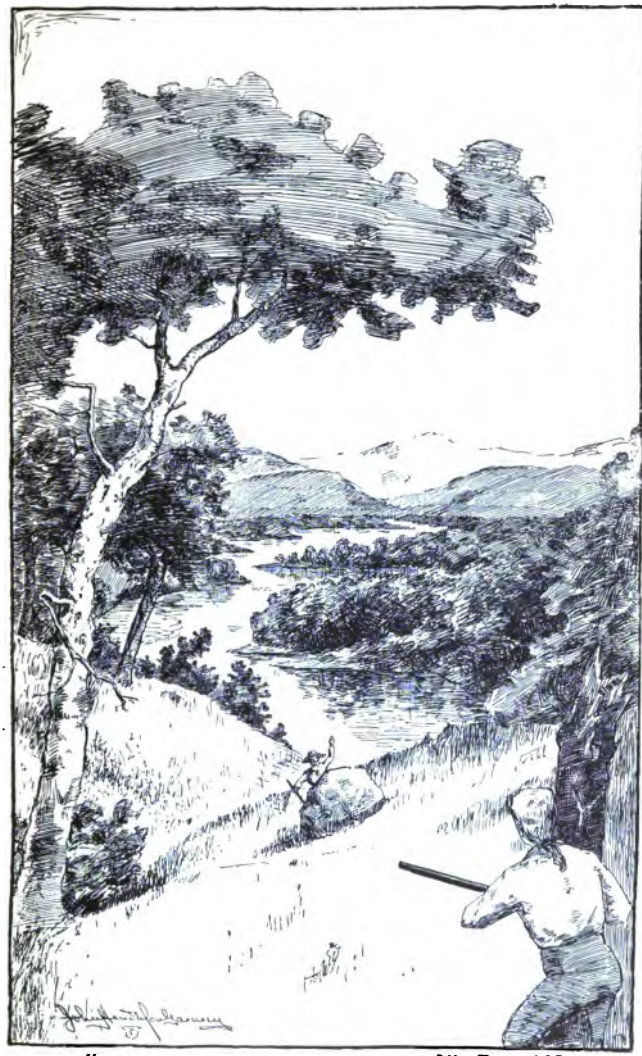
fear. There seemed to be no grounds for further delay, and pointing his weapon at the spot where he had last seen the head, he took a quick aim and pulled the trigger. It was a strange coincidence that at this very instant the man was in the act of rising to view again, and the poorly aimed shot, even when the distance was so great, came near proving fatal to the stranger. The smoke was scarcely wafted from the muzzle of the rifle, when the man sprang up from behind the rock, and standing erect, called out in a voice that penetrated far beyond the point aimed at.

"What the mischief are you trying to do?"

"I was trying to make you show yourself," replied the amazed Ned Clinton, "and that seemed to be the only way to do it."

"Well, I can't admit that I fancy that style of saying how-de-do to a fellow. Why don't you sing out to him and ask him what he is after?"

As the individual asked this question in the same loud voice, he unhesitatingly stepped from behind his concealment and began walking toward the one that had used him as a target. Ned accepted this proceeding as a proffer of good will, and although he was not quite satisfied, yet he began descending the tree, so as to be on the



"WHAT IN BLAZES ARE YOU AIMING AT?"—Page 168.

ground to meet him. He had barely time to acquaint Jo and Rosa Minturn with what had occurred, when the stranger appeared at the base of the tree and seemed not a little surprised to meet another young man with his handsome sister.

The new-comer was a man apparently in middle life, with a yellow, shaggy beard, reaching nearly to his eyes, dressed in rather tattered garments, that had more of the look of the farmer than the military about them. His face, so far as it could be seen, was by no means a pleasing one; the eyes were of a gray color, but with a strange, restless glitter. His appearance would lead one to set him down as a vagabond settler—one who was so lazy that he spent the greater part of his time in hunting the woods for game, or searching the streams for fish.

He was sharply scrutinized as he came to view, while he, in turn, keenly surveyed the fugitives.

If he were a settler, as he appeared to be, there was not one of the three who remembered seeing him before. To Jo Minturn there came a faint impression that he had met him at some time, though he could not recall where or when it was. But the stranger quickly recovered from

the temporary embarrassment he showed upon finding himself confronted by three, where he expected to see only one person.

"Well, now, I am glad to meet you," he said, in a hearty way that suggested the Mr. Perkins whom they had met when on the other side of the river. "I cotched sight of that young man climbing a tree, though I couldn't satisfy myself for a long time whether he was a friend or foe. I suppose you know me, don't you?"

Ned answered for the others:

"I have no recollection of having ever seen you before."

"Why, I remember you very well. You are Ned Clinton, and that young gentleman is Jo Minturn, with his sister Rosa."

"You are certainly right, as far as that goes, but you are none the less a stranger to us for all that!"

"My name is Worrell, and I am a settler, living about a mile up the river. I have often seen your father—both of them—at Forty Fort."

"That, I suppose, is where you have met us, also?"

"Yes, and at your homes near there. I do a

great deal of hunting, and have sold Mr. Minturn and Mr. Clinton a good deal of game."

"How is it you didn't recognize me when you saw me in the tree?"

"I couldn't make sure, because I couldn't get a fair look at you."

"How is it, too, that you are abroad at this time, when the Indians and Tories are playing havoc in the valley?"

"That's just the reason," was the ready response of Worrell. "A party of them came so near my home that I had to dig out. That was day before yesterday, and I have been roaming about the woods ever since, not daring to go back home again."

"What did they do with your family?"

"I haven't got any family, so there was nothing done with them."

"What were you doing when you observed me?"

"I had just reached that rock and had sat down to rest myself, when I was scared by happening to look toward you and seeing you climbing the tree. I have been dodging the redskins and Tories all of two days, and have had

pretty sharp work, I can tell you, and a good many narrow escapes. I had three scrimmages with redskins, and came so near losing my scalp in the last case that I have been mighty careful ever since as to how I went up to a stranger and shook hands with him till I was pretty sure he was a friend, which is why I waited so long with you."

"Well, you were cautious, indeed, but perhaps it was as well, for one can't be too careful at such a time as this."

"Then I take it you're dodging the same parties that I am?" said Worrell, taking a seat on the log, as if he meant to unite forces with the little party.

"Yes," replied Ned Clinton, willing to tell their new companion all their purposes, and glad of his company. "Yes, we set out for Wilkesbarre, but there are so many Indians in the path that we find the task a hard one."

"Are you alone?"

"Not exactly," was the answer. "We have an Indian scout with us."

"Who is he? Lena-Wingo, the Mohawk?"

"The same."

It may have been fancy on the part of Rosa, but at that moment she saw an expression flit over the small part of the man's face that was visible, that she thought betokened disappointment at these words.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### DOUBT AND PERPLEXITY.

THE fugitives felt like congratulating themselves upon the acquisition of so valuable a man as the patriot Worrell. A hunter like him, who had spent years in wandering through the woods, must be acquainted with all those places that were the most available as a means of concealment. There were many retreats which had proven of the greatest benefit to other fugitives, but they were those that had been seized upon in the frenzy of flight, when the thirsting pursuers were as eager as those whom they were hunting, and the slightest incident was frequently sufficient to turn aside the human bloodhounds. But something had now become necessary, for there was the danger of a carefully managed hunt by the Indians themselves, in which case the whites would need to take advantage of every expedient possible. What more likely, therefore, than that this man could give them the very assistance they needed in that respect?

The thought occurred to Ned Clinton and Jo Minturn at the same moment. Rosa remained seated when he came up, bowing politely to the stranger, but contenting herself with merely looking on and studying him as best she could. She was not much disturbed until she saw the expression of disappointment on the upper part of his face when he learned that Lena-Wingo, the Mohawk, had charge of the party and was expected soon to return. The opportunity of studying the character of the man from his face was limited on account of the shaggy, luxuriant beard; but woman has an intuitive perception, which avails her more than the reasoning power of man; and, although the maiden felt it was possible she was mistaken in what she saw there, the impression remained that he was one who ought to be regarded with distrust, if not suspicion. And yet she determined to say and do nothing that could interfere with any plans of her companions. She felt that she had already said much in that direction, and well convinced as she was that they were abundantly qualified to take care of themselves, it seemed to her the crisis was too grave for her to delay any movement by

objections for which she could give no valid reason.

"You've had that Mohawk to help you ever since you left Forty Fort?" was the inquiring remark of Worrell, in answer to the information of Ned Clinton that the Indian was a member of the party.

"Yes; we could n't have gotten along without him. There can be no doubt that we would have fallen into the hands of the Iroquois long ago but for his presence."

"Me and Red Jack—though I believe he likes his name of Lena-Wingo the best—have been on many a hunt together, and he beats anything I ever saw."

"There is no cause for his being otherwise, when he has spent so many years as a hunter and scout. The Iroquois would give a great deal to secure his scalp."

"You can just bet they would, and so would Colonel Butler, Captain Bagley or any of the Tories. You know that the fellow has done too much against the scamps to be forgiven. But where has he gone?"

"He is off taking a look through the neighbor-

hood to see how the land lies, and what is the best thing for us to do."

"When do you expect him back?"

"We expect him from this time forward till he comes, but there is no telling when that will be. He is master of his own motions, and will return, I suppose, when he deems the hour is best for him to do so."

"I found that out long ago, but you don't know where he has gone?"

"No more than you. You seem interested."

"Well, Red Jack and me are old friends, and if I knowed where he was I might go out to hunt him up and give him a point or two about the lay of the land in these parts."

"I suppose you are acquainted with it all?"

"Well, I ain't the man to boast, and don't know that it is bragging to tell the truth. But if there is a spot I don't know all about in this neighborhood I'm ready to pay a good reward for a sight of the same."

"It seems to me you might be able to do us a good turn."

"I'll do anything in the world for you and the lady, if I have the chance. What have you in mind?"

"We feel that, as long as we occupy this position, we are in danger of being swooped down upon by the Iroquois—"

"You can bet on that! Didn't I tell you a minute ago how many narrer escapes I made while poking round in these woods? Why, it ain't an hour ago since I saw three Indians that must have been some of the painted Iroquois who are looking around for you!"

"Is that the case?" asked Jo Minturn, rising to his feet and walking closer to their visitor. "How far off were they?"

"Not more than a quarter of a mile at the most, and it took careful work on my part to keep out of their way."

The youths looked at each other with something like dismay, while Rosa became deeply interested.

"There can scarcely be a doubt that they were hunting for us," said Jo, in an undertone that was intended to escape his sister, but of which every word reached her ear. "It isn't a pleasant situation, with Lena-Wingo gone, and no one knowing when he will be back. He is the shrewdest fellow in the world, but no one is smart enough to save himself from mistake

at all times. Who knows but that he has gone in just such a direction that he will escape seeing the very Indians from whom the visit is most likely to come?"

"I think that we had better get this fellow to take us to some good hiding-places where we can place Rosa—at least, till the Mohawk comes back. I don't believe he has any idea of trying to run into Wilkesbarre while it is day, but is getting up some plan for stealing in at night with her."

"It does look that way, which means our waiting in some place of hiding till the time shall come to make the attempt."

"And this isn't much of a hiding-place, when the minute I climbed a tree I was seen by Worrell, there."

"It makes Lena-Wingo angry," continued Jo, who felt a hesitation about running directly in the face of the well-known wishes of the dusky scout, "for us to disregard his instructions on a point like this; but I think if he understood the chance we have of helping him in this matter he would be glad for us to avail ourselves of it."

"Well, I can't see that there is any great risk run in allowing Worrell to conduct us to shelter. This will never be of any use to us, and I can't feel safe here one minute after what he has told us. I propose that we get him to find us other quarters."

"I'm favorable to the plan, because he is a good hunter, and while Lena-Wingo is operating in one direction, he may be of help in the way, also, of getting food for us."

And so it was that, look at the matter in whatever light they chose, it seemed a wise step for them to call in the services of the straggling patriot that had joined them in the rather curious manner already told. The only hesitation with the young men came from the consciousness that they were sure to violate either the expressed or understood command of the Mohawk. But they argued themselves into a justification of the step by the manifest advantages to be gained in taking it.

"Find out what Rosa thinks about it," finally suggested Ned, when the two had gone over all the arguments to each other.

Jo stepped over to where his sister was sitting and put the question to her.

"Whatever you think best," was her answer. "I don't feel, Jo, that I am competent to give advice."

"There can be no doubt that it is the best thing for us to do, but we hesitate because it will be a direct disregard of the wishes of Lena Wingo himself."

"If the move is for the best, he will find no fault with you. But, Jo, are you sure that if you put yourself under charge of that man it *will* be for the best?"

## CHAPTER XXIV.

### THE NEW GUIDE.

MINTURN looked in the face of his sister a moment, as if he would read her very thoughts. Then he asked in a whisper that not even Ned Clinton overheard:

"Do you mistrust him, Rosa?"

She regretted her words, and answered:

"I ought not to have said it, Jo, but I didn't like his looks when he first joined us; have you ever seen him before?"

"I think I have, though I can't recall the place or occasion."

"Well, that makes a different matter of it; do as you think best."

Believing that his sister had come to his view of the case, Jo so stated to Ned, and there was no further hesitation. While this little conference was going on, Worrell remained seated, acting as if he had no concern in the matter. He busied himself in examining his rifle, and making sure it was in order. A minute or so before Jo was pre-

pared to make a definite proposition to him, he rose to his feet, and assumed an attitude of intense attention, as though some faint signal had fallen on his ear. Then as the young scout turned to address him, he spoke first:

"Well, I guess I'll have to bid you good-morning."

"And why so?" asked Jo, in some surprise.

"To tell the truth, this is too dangerous a place to stay any longer. I hear sounds in the woods that lead me to think there are some of the redskins not very far off, and I prefer to dig out; maybe it'll be safer and better for you to wait till Lena-Wingo comes back, and he'll get you out better than I can."

"No one could do better than the Mohawk if he were only here, but the trouble is he is n't here just now, and we've come to the conclusion that it is not safe to wait for him. Where do you mean to go?"

"Oh, there's a little hiding-place up here a way, where I'll crawl into, for, when I'm in there, you may trot out all the redskins in the valley, and I'll go to sleep while they're hunting. I don't care if Lena-Wingo is among them. I ca'c'late

to spend some time there till the Indians get a little scarcer."

"What will you do for food?"

"I've got *that* fixed," replied Worrell, in a voice and with a manner that implied there was noth ing to fear on that score.

"Well, if you will allow us to go with you—"

"All w you!" exclaimed the man, in a gushing mood. "Haven't I been wanting you to go with me ever since I stopped and found in what trouble you were? Why, come along, and I'll put you in a place where you can stay a month, if you want to, without a living soul finding out where you are."

"We'll do it, and be forever grateful for your kindness; but you say even Lena-Wingo will be unable to find out where we are hiding. We must let him know where we are when he returns and misses us."

"That can be fixed. When we see him looking for us, we can step out and let him know we are around, and he'll be there in a second, of course."

"All right, then; lead the way."

The man placed himself at the head of the party, Jo following, while Ned and Rosa brought up the rear. The first move of Worrell impressed

the youths in his favor, for he headed toward the mountain close at hand, a course that would suggest itself to one who was hunting a hiding-place. It looked as if he understood his business, and knew where to take them to find what they wanted. There was no material change in the appearance of the forest through which they were making their way, except that it grew somewhat rougher and more difficult to traverse, though the company continued to journey without any hesitation in their rate of progress.

They pushed along for quite a distance in this manner, when their guide halted, as if he had again detected something that did not suit him. He stood with his head bent in the way they noticed before starting, but said nothing.

"What's up now?" asked Jo, who thought they might as well understand everything as they went along.

"It's queer," replied their companion, in a low voice, "but I've fancied once or twice that I heard signals in the woods just such as have caught my ear when I knew the redskins were looking for some of us. Night before last, I picked up a poor chap—Tom Haley, a settler living near me, and was on my way to another place to hide him,

when we heard the same sort of sounds, and we stopped to listen to 'em, but we hadn't stood more than five minutes when they come down on us. The first notice we had was the banging of about a dozen rifles, and that was the last of poor Tom. I was lucky enough to get away, but I don't want to meet any more neighbors like that."

This was not cheerful or soothing information, and the three fugitives felt anything but comfortable.

"Haven't you heard the sounds?" asked Worrell, addressing the three.

None of them had noticed anything, and Rosa asked:

"What do they resemble?"

"Nothing so much as the faint call of the whip-o'-will, so low and soft that the ear can hardly catch it."

"It is strange that you should be the only one to notice it," she continued; "are you sure that you weren't mistaken?"

"It may be I was, but my experience with the Iroquois has made me very suspicious; but I do hope I was off the track, for it may prove a bad thing if I wasn't."

"Do you hear it now?"

"Hark! let us listen."

All stood motionless, and scarcely breathing. But nothing resembling the sounds described by their guide was noticed.

"It *does* look as if I was mistaken," said Worrell, brightening up. "I hope I was."

"It could be very well the other way," said Ned Clinton. "The Indians may have made a dozen calls to each other, but they were not likely to keep it up very long. A few signals would accomplish all they want."

Nothing was to be gained by argument over the question, in which all was conjecture, and they moved on once more. It was not five minutes before their guide paused again, but it was only for a moment, and he said nothing. He acted as if he fancied he caught something suspicious, but seeing the whites with the appearance of attention, concluded he was mistaken, so long as nothing of the kind fell upon their ears. By that time the afternoon was well advanced, and the day was somewhat warmer than before.

None of the fugitives had gained a moment's sleep during the preceding night, while the exhaustion and privation of the past few days were so

severe that they experienced the need of rest and food. Ned and Jo felt that the man could not do them a greater favor and kindness than to lead them into some retreat where they could recuperate in this respect,—sleep being needed more than anything else. Jo turned about while they were walking cautiously forward, and whispered to Ned immediately behind:

"Watch the route we take."

Ned nodded his head to signify he understood him. At intervals they reached and crossed small spaces of natural clearings, where Rosa and the youths scanned all the country that could be brought under their field of vision. In no instance were these very extensive, and the view resulted in nothing tangible as regarded the movements of their enemies. Much of the ground which was passed was rough and covered with stones. Upon these they stepped so carefully that they left a trail which it would require the keenest eye of the Indian warrior to detect and follow.

## CHAPTER XXV.

### THE HIDING-PLACE.

TWENTY minutes or more was consumed by Worrell, in conducting the fugitives to the hiding-place, where he promised they should be secure from all molestation from their enemies. In making this journey they walked slowly, often pausing to examine the ground passed over, and to listen for those unfavorable signals which the straggling settler was sure he heard from the Iroquois. Thus it was that, in spite of the time consumed in making the expedition, they were really at no great distance from the starting-point, and both Ned and Jo were confident that they could retrace their steps without difficulty.

"Here we are!"

As the guide uttered these words, he paused before a mass of boulders, or large stones, where there was an abundance of undergrowth, and the trees were so numerous that the view in all directions was almost cut off.

"I see we are here," responded Ned. "But what for?"

"Here is the hiding-place I told you about."

"Where?"

All three were looking inquiringly around, but their eyes saw nothing that could explain why the man called this a place of concealment.

"Do you mean that we are to crouch behind some of these stones, just as you did behind the rock, when you found I was looking at you?" asked Ned Clinton, with a laugh.

"Not exactly. Wait and I'll show you."

He walked forward a few steps further and turned to the right, approaching a large stone that looked heavy enough to require the strength of a Hercules to stir it. Nevertheless, with one hand he turned it aside, it being so nicely poised that there was no trouble in using it as a door on hinges. Drawn back, the astonished whites saw the entrance to a cave beyond. The indications were that, at some remote time, the stones had been placed in position by a party of aborigines of the country, and used by them as a retreat or dwelling.

"It is the very place," said Rosa; "for I have been inside."

"You? When?" asked her brother.

"Lena-Wingo brought me here one day last fall, when we were caught in a storm in these mountains!"

"What kind of a place is it?"

"There could be no better one for us. I thought of it this morning, and spoke to Lena-Wingo about it."

"What did he say?"

"He replied that he would probably take us here, if he found we had to keep out of sight for awhile."

"That is well, then. Mr. Worrell has done for us what the Mohawk meant to do later in the day."

"I don't know that I would not have proposed to you that we should come here after he left, if I had been sure of finding my way, but I wasn't."

"Is the interior comfortable?"

"It is in warm weather, for none of the sun's rays can enter, and the stones seem to give it coolness."

"As dark as a wolf's mouth, I suppose?"

"Not at all. There are several windows, made

by crevices between the stones, which let in enough light to help us see where we are."

"The young lady speaks the truth," said Worrell. "She has been in and remembers all about it."

"How came you to find it when it is so well concealed?"

"I was hunting a bear in these mountains some two years ago and wounded him, when he started to retreat. I followed him as fast as I could, when he put straight for this heap of stones, and he would have got away if I had n't come in sight just in time to see him pull that door aside with one paw and start in. I gave him a shot as he was doing so, and it finished him before he could get out of my reach."

The reports of the cavern being so favorable, the fugitives were glad to avail themselves of its shelter without further delay. Ned Clinton was the first to explore the retreat, he being obliged to assume a stooping position to enter it. As soon as he was inside, he called to the others to follow, and Worrell himself obeyed, Jo going next, while Rosa came last.

The place was not a disappointment in the least when viewed from the inside. The windows

of which Rosa spoke proved sufficient to give all the light they could ask, and more than the young scouts expected to see. Besides, when they were fairly within it was noticed that the roof ascended, while the floor was lowered to that extent that they could easily stand at their full height—a luxury which any one in their situation would have appreciated. It was dry, and there was nothing to make them uncomfortable. Expressions of delight came from all, excepting him who had taken them to the retreat. He seemed to enjoy listening to the praise bestowed upon his choice.

"Ah! if some of the poor fellows who were fleeing from Monacacy and the woods, after the battle," said Ned, "could have stumbled upon this they would have been safe."

"And even if they had been seen," added Jo, "they could have turned it into a fort itself, and held out against ten times their number."

"Then why can we not make the same use of it?" asked Rosa. "It will serve us if Colonel Butler happens to discover where we are hid."

"He isn't going to discover us," put in Worrell, with a confidence which gave the youths greater faith in their safety than before; but which,

strange to say, impressed Rosa in the opposite manner.

It was the manner rather than the words that grated on her sensibilities, and she found her old mistrust of the man deeper than before. It struck her that he was too ready to declare they were now beyond the reach of Colonel Butler and his men. It was like parrying a blow before it was struck, though the young men readily saw in the words which called out the remark sufficient cause for the same. With this suspicion came a conviction that, despite the critical position in which they seemed to be placed, when awaiting the return of the Mohawk, they had committed a perilous blunder in leaving the spot where he would expect to find them.

"I said there was no danger of our being discovered by Colonel Butler or any of his men; but maybe that was putting it too strong, for I suppose that we are always in danger as long as them redskins are within a dozen miles of us; but what I meant to say was, that there ain't any spot anywhere among these mountains where you can feel safer from the enemy than here."

This is what he ought to have said in the first place, as it seemed to Rosa, and yet the after effect

of the words was almost as if they had been uttered at the right time. A strange compound is that which goes to make up the emotions of man and woman; for with the expression just given, Rosa Minturn experienced something like a revulsion of feeling, and reproved herself that she should have suspected the man at all. She saw in him nothing but a simple-minded hunter-settler, who was a fugitive for the time being like themselves, and was anxious to befriend them to the best of his ability. The most circumspect and devoted ally would have acted as he did. Because he was dressed in rather shabby attire, and was unattractive in person, should she doubt his loyalty? Had she not lived long enough to learn that "the rank is but a guinea's stamp," and that, though repulsive without, he might be "a man for a' that?"

## CHAPTER XXVI.

### CURIOUS PROCEEDINGS.

In the twilight of the underground apartment, the figures of each were dimly discernible, but there was abundance of room for all to circulate without interfering with each other. Ned conducted the girl to the furthest extremity of the cavern, where it would seem that the couches of the ancient occupants had been placed.

"You are wearied and tired," said he, in a tender voice. "Let me beg you to use your chance while it is here. Recline in the corner and Jo and I will keep watch."

"But you and he need rest as well as I!" she protested. "Why not seek it now?"

"Perhaps we may. I will talk to him, but don't think of us. Here seems to be some sort of blanket."

At this moment Worrell called out:

"You'll find a blanket near where you are standing. I left it a few weeks ago when I was hunting in these parts."

Everything seemed to be as they wished, and Rosa accepted the invitation, which was emphasized by her own sense of its need. She sat down on the blanket, with her head resting against a large stone behind her, just as she had sat many a time in the old armchair at home, and she had scarcely assumed the position when she sank into slumber.

"Well, now you are here," said Worrell, as Ned Clinton came back from where Rosa was reclining, "how do you mean to pass the time?"

"Jo and I, here, are half dead for sleep, and if we can put in a couple of hours or so, it will make new fellows of us."

"What's to hinder? Why don't you lay down and sleep all you want to?"

"It looks like running great risk for all three of us to commit ourselves to slumber when the Indians might steal in and nab every one of us."

Worrell laughed.

"I never seen anybody so backward about asking a favor as you. If I hadn't pumped that out of you, you two would have sat here winking, and blinking, and nodding for hours,

just 'cause you had a notion in your heads that there was some danger in going to sleep."

"We may take turns about it," said Jo. "But we could not consent that all of us should be unconscious at the same time."

Again the fellow laughed, as though it was all a capital joke.

"I put in ten, good, solid hours of slumber here last night, and I can't do any more of it before midnight, if I was to be paid a thousand pounds for it."

"And you are willing to stay here a couple of hours while we sleep?"

"Nothing will give me greater pleasure."

"I don't know how we shall ever pay you for your kindness."

"By never saying nothing about it. Come, we're losing too much time; you'll get no sleep at all if you never stop talking. Lay down at once, for I ca'c'late you ain't partic'lar about having a straw bed, nor very soft pillers."

Again expressing their gratitude to the man for his repeated kindness, Ned and Jo stretched themselves upon the flinty floor, and quickly glided into the land of dreams. Slumber, indeed, they all needed, for the most athletic and hard-

ened frame, the toughest and most enduring system, must have time in which to recuperate the exhausted energies. Five minutes from the time Ned Clinton spoke the last words to the settler, the latter was the only one within the cavern who possessed his senses. In the far corner scarcely visible in the dim light of the place, reclined the lovely Rosa, and nearer, in full view, were stretched the forms of her two friends—all handsome and attractive, but as helpless as so many babes.

For a brief while after the slumber of the whites had come upon them, Worrell, the straggling farmer, sat near the entrance of the cavern, the stone which served as a door being partly drawn aside, so that a flood of light made its way through, and fell directly on his countenance. It was a curious scene—the three unconscious forms, while the fourth was wider awake than ever. He was sitting at the very entrance, the light which streamed in striking him in such a way that all was in shadow excepting his hat, shoulders, and face. The slouched head-gear was thrown back, showing a low forehead, while the hair that lay in matted and spiked masses on and around his crown

was of a grizzled brown color—that which dangled from beneath his hat when he met the young scouts being of as fiery a red as were the whiskers themselves.

So curious an exhibition proved that it was never done by the hand of nature! The whiskers themselves looked genuine, until a movement of the hand caused a displacement, such as could not have taken place, had they been attached to the face by a natural growth.

The man muttered impatiently, glanced toward the sleeping forms of the youths, and drew back into the shadow until he could set all right again. Then, satisfied that they were in too deep slumber to notice his actions, he leaned forward, throwing his head and shoulders into the sunlight as before. And why sat he there so close to the opening of the cavern? Was it that he might the better hear the sound of danger when it came that way? Was it that he meant that his ward and watch should be as faithful as if it were his own loved ones whom he was guarding against the approach of wolves or ravening beasts? It might be all this—it might be otherwise.

A few more minutes passed, and he turned and looked toward the young men with a piercing, penetrating glance, as if something aroused his suspicion. He did not stir as he pronounced the name of Ned Clinton in quite a loud voice, repeating it several times, and doing the same in the case of Jo Minturn. The slumber of both was too deep to be disturbed by such trivial causes, and he received no answer.

"I don't believe they're playing possum," he muttered to himself, staring distrustfully toward them. But it won't do to make any blunder right here."

To prevent any error, he rose softly and walked to where they were sleeping. Brief listening told him that their regular breathing was not feigned, but he leaned over and shook each in turn by the shoulder, pronouncing their names in louder tones than before. The slumber continued undisturbed. A muttered exclamation escaped the man again, one expressive of pleasure at the discovery.

"They'll sleep till to-morrow morning if nobody comes along to wake 'em up. The trouble is with that deuced Mohawk, who has a way of turning up just when he isn't wanted. But

I don't think he'll get a chance to put his finger in this pie."

He looked over in the gloom toward the corner where he could catch the outlines of the head of Rosa Minturn, as it rested against a large stone. Then he appeared to be of the opinion that the time had come for action of some kind. He moved to the cavern door but did not stay there; with scarcely a pause, he stooped down and speedily placed himself on the outside of the mountain retreat.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

### WHAT DOES IT ALL MEAN?

As soon as Worrell found himself on the outside of the cavern, he walked rapidly for a hundred yards or so, taking a direction at right angles to that which he followed when conducting the fugitives to the retreat. His gait became almost a run until he reached an elevation, when he paused, as if to make a survey of a portion of the country spread out below him.

"The sun is almost overhead," he muttered, as he looked up to the sky with an impatient expression, "and I am all of an hour behind time, but this is one of them things that can't be fixed just as you want it, and I don't see why it should make any difference."

He was gazing at the section which lay spread out at his feet, and was between him and the Susquehanna. His eyes first roved in a quick, restless way over the broad stretch of woods and clearings, as if seeking for some object upon which to rest. At the end of a few minutes, his

gaze became fixed upon a place where stood a small house in the middle of a clearing. It evidently belonged to one of the settlers in the Wyoming valley, who had been smitten with the panic which drove so many from their homes, and had fled without taking any of his stock with him, or destroying his property to prevent it falling into the hands of the enemy.

The manner of Worrell showed that he awaited some person or signal in connection with this house, but he was disappointed. The tomb itself could not have been more deserted and desolate, and he gazed until sure there was nothing on or about it which was intended for his eye.

"That's the way it always is," he muttered. "I have got everything fixed just as I promised, and now they turn up missing at the very time they ought to be on hand. I suppose I've got to hunt 'em up, and that may take me till dark, by which time that Mohawk will put in his oar."

He spent a few more minutes searching for something which did not appear. Then he advanced to a small tree that grew on the edge of the open space where he had halted, and drawing a large red handkerchief from his pocket, bent down a small sapling and tied the silk to

it. As the little tree flew back to its upright position, there was enough breeze to make the signal rise and float in the wind. The man stood off a few paces, and watched it.

"I can't improve on that," he said to himself. "If they will only look this way, they can't help seeing it, and it will tell the story; but the trouble is, there is no knowing when they will take the trouble to look this way. Faugh! why didn't they leave the whole thing to me? It would have been ended by this time, and there would have been no after-clap, but this waiting and bother is what will upset the whole arrangement unless they come up to time better than they are likely to do."

Impatient as he was, he was obliged to content himself, while he kept an unremitting watch on the house and its surroundings, occasionally giving vent to his feelings by a series of expletives. In fact, Worrell, who now showed himself to himself, as it may be said, was altogether a less prepossessing character than the one who had so kindly conducted the fugitives to the hiding-place in the woods, and bidden them sleep while he watched over their slumbers. Suddenly he started. He had discerned something for which

he was waiting. Moving to the edge of the open space, he gazed with the keenness of one whose life depended upon making no mistake as to what he saw. The house which engaged so much of his attention was a quarter of a mile distant. The wonder was how he distinguished anything so far off with enough certainty to determine its character; but he had done so.

"Better late than never," he muttered; "though it looked awhile ago as if it was to be never. Yes," he added, a moment after, "they are there, and it won't take them long to find out that I am here."

So it proved; for, in a few minutes there was an answering signal waving from an upper window of the house in the form of a handkerchief of a white color, swung by the hand of a man instead of the wind, as in the former case.

"I don't know as there's any use of my waiting any longer," he growled, "for I don't s'pose they'll come to me, and I may as well go to them, for there is no telling where that infernal Mohawk is. I wouldn't meet him for all the Colonel Butlers that ever breathed. He is the devil himself, and I prefer to keep out of his path."

Impressed with the value of time, the man gripped the sapling and swung it violently, so as to make the red handkerchief wave in the breeze. Then he started down the mountain, taking a direction which led him straight toward the house in which he had shown so much interest from the first. All the way was down-hill, and Worrell walked like one accustomed to the woods, making such good time that at the end of ten minutes he was with the parties whom he was anxious to see and meet. Who were they?

Six Indians, under the charge of Captain Bagley, who has already been introduced to our readers.

A glance at the painted warriors showed they were Iroquois, who were following so vigilantly the fugitives that had managed to elude them thus far. Bagley emerged from the house and shook hands with Worrell, the two at once entering into a hurried conversation, while the Indians, in accordance with their nature, stood apart, saying nothing to each other, but satisfied to wait till the time should come for them to act in obedience to the orders of their leader. Something was wrong, for Bagley and Worrell continued talking a long time, each earnest and

abounding with gesture. As might be supposed, it was Lena-Wingo, the Mohawk, that had caused the trouble. Several of the warriors had seen him in another direction, and an encounter of some kind had taken place between the celebrated scout and the Iroquois, with the result that Colonel Butler had now two less men than before.

Captain Bagley was of the opinion that the half dozen with him were insufficient to enter the cave and secure the fugitives sleeping there. He wanted about as many more before making the attempt. Worrell insisted there should be no delay. The three were in sound slumber, and all they had to do was to enter the cavern, take possession of their arms, and then the trio themselves. Captain Bagley's objection to this was that because of the time that had elapsed, they would not be found asleep when his men arrived there.

Furthermore, from what his informant told him, he was confident the Mohawk would reach the cavern ahead of them, in which event it would be vain to attack them with only six Indians and two white men, even though these eight were among the bravest soldiers that had entered

the Wyoming valley. It was folly, in his opinion, to try such a task without a force that would insure success from the first. Worrell, however, was as vehement for an immediate advance, insisting that all that was needed was promptness. A liberal reward had been promised him, and would assuredly be his if his plan was carried to a successful completion. At last, his importunity prevailed when he promised to be the first one to enter the cavern, and the start was made.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

### UP AND DOING.

WORRELL, the traitor, had been gone nearly an hour from the cavern in which the three fugitives were sleeping, when Rosa Minturn awoke, no doubt because she was not so much in need of sleep as the others, and held a lingering suspicion of the loyalty of the man who had brought them to the retreat. This distrust went to sleep with her, but it is a peculiarity of the mind that the emotions which have been with us through our waking hours frequently remain with us when we are wrapped in slumber. It is as if the innumerable train that is forever wending its way through the mysterious labyrinths of the brain repeats the procession, and those which affected us the most strongly when in command of our senses often do the same when we are unconscious. But without stopping to consider the question, suffice it to say that at the time mentioned Rosa opened her eyes in full possession of

her faculties, and with the impression that the man Worrell was an enemy instead of a friend.

She did not move at first, supposing he was still within the cavern; but, as she peered cautiously around the dimly lighted space, she saw only the forms of her two sleeping friends. The fact at once deepened the suspicion, and caused her great distress of mind, for all doubt of the hostility of the man was removed upon making the discovery. Still she supposed it possible that he was close at hand, and waited several minutes to see whether he reappeared; but her condition of mind was such that every second of delay caused her increasing uneasiness.

"I am sure he has gone to tell Colonel Butler and the Indians where we are," she said to herself, as she rose and walked to where her brother was asleep.

Stooping over, she shook him by the shoulder until he opened his eyes and, recognizing her, asked what the matter was.

"That man has gone."

"Where has he gone?"

"To tell the Indians we are here!"

Jo sprang to his feet.

"What are you talking about, Rosa? What do you mean?"

"Just as I say; he has gone to bring the Indians, and will soon be back, too."

"How do you know that?"

"Don't ask me, but I *know* what I say."

This was alarming news, and though Jo suspected his sister based all upon her dislike of the man, without positive knowledge of the facts, yet he was impressed with the belief that she had good cause for her words.

"He may be on the outside, keeping watch," said the youth, after they had talked over the matter. "Wait till I take a look. If he can't be found, we'll awake Ned."

Jo crept out of the cavern dreading a hostile shot as he did so, and made as thorough an examination of the surroundings as was possible. He saw nothing of the man whom they missed, that individual at that moment being a quarter of a mile or more away, holding his vehement argument with Captain Bagley about the advance with the six Iroquois upon the sleeping fugitives. His invisibility confirmed the young man in his misgivings as to the treachery of the man.

"I have no doubt Rosa is right," he muttered, as he walked thoughtfully back toward the cavern. "She was always quick to detect anything like that, and it is strange that neither Ned nor I had any such thought. The only thing that troubled us was whether we could convince Lena-Wingo we did right in leaving the place where he left us. The thought never entered our heads that there was anything of this kind in the wind."

He had reached the mouth of the cavern again, where his sister was anxiously waiting him.

"Did you find anything of him?"

"No," he answered, with a shake of the head. "I believe you are right; the man has gone off somewhere after his promise to keep watch over us while we slept; that's enough for me. Is Ned awake?"

"Not that I am aware of."

"He must be aroused at once, for it will not do to stay here after what has taken place."

Jo passed inside and awakened his friend, without pausing to be very gentle as to the means. It took but a minute to make plain the trouble. He became as alert and suspicious as they on the instant.

"There!" he exclaimed; "I had a suspicion when he came under the tree that I had seen him somewhere."

"So had I, but I couldn't recall where and when it was."

"Don't you remember when the battle was going on the other day, we saw one man among the Tories who was tomahawking the whites as savagely as any of them?"

"Yes, I remember him well, but he didn't look like this fellow!"

"Not a great deal, that's true, but I believe it was he for all that."

Jo was silent for a moment, as if in deep thought.

"There was something about him that reminds me of this fellow, though one had whiskers and the other had not, and it is hard to tell just how they resemble each other."

The youths were more anxious to take themselves and Rosa away from the cavern than they were to discuss the question, upon which they agreed quite well. Hastily picking up their rifles, they passed outside. When they found themselves within the shelter of the wood again, and beyond the vision of any one who

might approach the retreat, the relief was inexpressible.

"We agree that the counsel of Rosa was wise," said Ned Clinton, as they came to a halt, "but you see how it may be possible she was mistaken. Now it won't do to go wandering too far from the place, for when the Mohawk comes back and finds us gone he may not hunt for us."

"Why not, then, go back over the same route that we followed in coming here?" asked Jo.

"That is what I would like to do, if it wasn't for the danger; it seems to me that that is the path which Worrell will take when he starts for the cavern again with his Indians, and we don't want to meet him face to face, for we can do that by waiting in the cavern."

"I have it!" exclaimed Ned. "I will take the back trail alone, on the lookout for the Mohawk and for the white man, too. What do you say?"

"And shall Rosa and I wait here till you come back?"

"That will be the safer plan, unless another Worrell comes along amd takes you away to a new cavern or hiding-place."

"We will be as safe here as anywhere," said Rosa, believing that her opinion would have some weight in the matter.

"I suspect she is right," assented her brother. "If the Iroquois come to the cavern and find we have left, they will think we have got as far away as we can, and they won't be apt to look for us so close at hand; and then, too, these stones over which we have traveled haven't left any trail for them to follow."

"Which shows why you shouldn't go hunting for some other location, unless the Indians happen to come so close that you can't help it, for it will be impossible for me to hunt you up."

This was simple truth, and Jo promised that nothing should be done to increase the difficulty of their speedy reunion, whenever his friend should want to find him and Rosa again. The day was passing and it seemed that they were trifling away the time which was so valuable to all the fugitives. There was something, too, in the continued absence of their guide, Lena-Wingo, that caused them uneasiness. They recalled that he had promised a speedy return, and it was rarely that the Mohawk made them a promise which was not fulfilled in spirit and letter.

## CHAPTER XXIX.

### A STARTLING CHECK.

NED and Jo had said nothing to each other about the continued absence of the Mohawk, for whatever they might utter would necessarily be conjecture, and would only excite the alarm of Rosa without accomplishing any good. But it was in the thoughts of both, and when Ned bade the two good-bye for a season, it occupied more of his speculations than did the movements of the man who had played them false.

"One can never lose faith in Lena-Wingo, and yet the pitcher may go to the fountain once too often," he mused, as he picked his way with the greatest care. "And that great scout is likely to fall at any time. A single rifle ball may do it, and he cannot tell whether there is not more than one of his own race in hiding, waiting patiently till he shall come that way and receive his death. He has escaped so often that he must become careless of his own safety, and will pay the penalty one of these days."

Ned had fixed the route so clearly in his own mind that he found no difficulty in retracing the steps taken when he was following the leadership of Worrell. He was apprehensive that he would meet him on his return, probably with a number of Indians. He therefore picked his way with all the care and stealth of which he was master. He imitated the actions of Lena-Wingo under similar circumstances. Frequently pausing and listening for sounds of his enemies, he used his eyes as keenly as he could for the detection of the first sign of approaching danger. This kind of progress was not of the most rapid order, but it was the wisest that could have been adopted, and he continued it for half an hour. At the end of that time, he reached the base of the tree from the branches of which he fired the shot that brought Worrell from behind the rock.

"Here is where we met him," he said to himself, "and I have a feeling that he isn't very far away now. What a wise girl Rosa is!" he added, with a blush, as if fearful she had heard the complimentary words. "She mistrusted that villain from the first, and gave us the alarm just in time to save ourselves."

Having reached the spot for which he set out, the question with the youth was whether he should stay where he was or go further. He had seen nothing of Lena-Wingo and Worrell—a disappointment in both cases, though of a different nature.

"I can't see why the Indian stays away so long, unless something unusual has happened. He must know how much we are alarmed over his absence, and he would be back if it were possible."

Waiting a short time, he concluded to advance a little further, so as to meet either of the two men if they were approaching, while at a greater distance from the cavern, though he was not unmindful that he was liable to miss them altogether. However, he had gone less than a hundred yards when he detected the signs of some one coming immediately in front. It was his ear which heard a crackling of a twig, so close that he had barely time to leap aside and conceal himself from view when the figure of Worrell, closely followed by Captain Bagley, came up a sort of path toward the open space from which Ned had fled in such haste. The youth barely caught sight of them when the forms of six

Iroquois appeared, one by one, immediately in the rear of the two white men.

When Ned saw the latter, he was much concerned, fearing that they would detect the slight trail he must have left in his hurry for cover. But it was too late to make any further flight, as he would be discovered from the noise, if not by the sight.

From his concealment he watched the party, their manner of marching being peculiar, as the eight walked in Indian file. Worrell, being the guide, took the lead. Bagley kept so close that they could hold a conversation in low tones, while the Iroquois stalked along like so many phantoms of the wood.

If Ned was alarmed at sight of the red men, knowing their skill in detecting and following a trail of an enemy, he was thrown into a cold perspiration of dread when the whole party halted in the open space from which he had bounded when he heard the crackling twig. The clear space covered something like an eighth of an acre, and Clinton was too disturbed to notice that the particular spot where the group was gathered was so far removed from his footprints that there was really little danger of

their being noticed. But when they had stood awhile, and the two white men began a conversation, he noticed the gratifying fact and became composed enough to listen to the words that passed between Captain Bagley and Worrell.

"You may say what you please," said the former, "but there is more risk in this business than I want to assume. You are so anxious to get the reward promised by Colonel Butler that you can't see the difficulties in the way."

"If there were any difficulties I would see them, but they ain't there. Where's the difficulty in eight armed men taking possession of two who are asleep, and a woman who is also unconscious?"

"None, of course, when you put it in that way; but the Mohawk is somewhere about, and, as I told you a while ago, he has a way of turning up just when you don't want to see him."

"These Iroquois say they want to meet him, and if he is there, they'll have the chance."

"But I ain't anxious to meet him, and if he is about, as I feel in my bones he is, there'll be the mischief to pay."

Worrell uttered an imprecation. He had been obliged to keep up an argument with the captain ever since they started from the house with the Indians—even before; and now the man had halted again, more loth than ever to proceed. It was plain that he held the Mohawk in great fear.

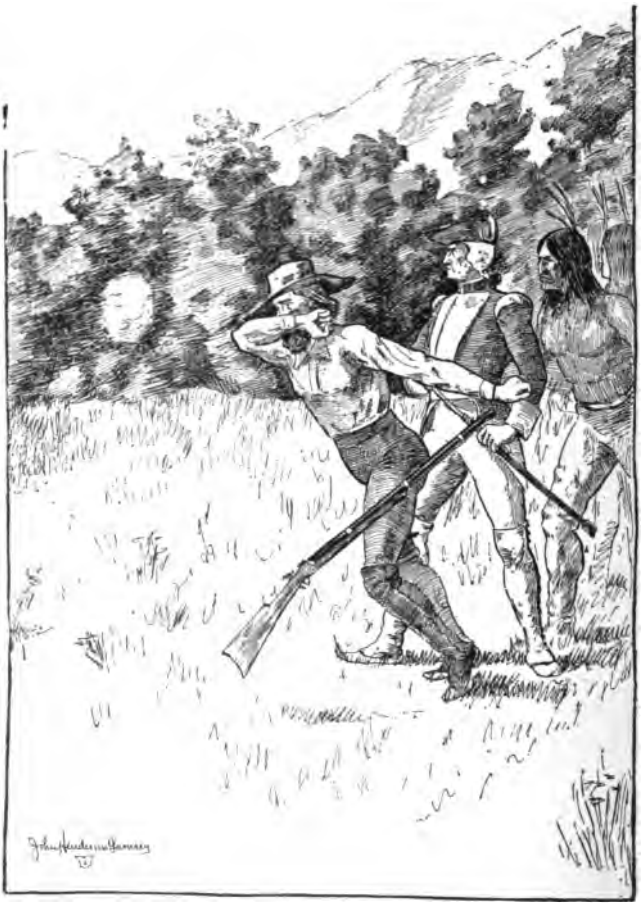
"Where is this cave in which you say the party are asleep?" he asked, in reply to the explanation of the guide.

"You have only to go a little way further with me and you'll see it," replied Worrell, who was evidently unwilling that anyone should share so valuable a secret with him.

"Colonel Butler has all of twenty of the best Iroquois with him, and the wisest thing for us is to go to his camp, tell him how the case stands, and get him to let us have eight or ten more; then we can come back and lay regular siege to the place. Then we shall be sure of catching them sooner or later."

"Yes, at the end of a month or so, and it won't do for Butler to stay much longer in the valley. He knows it, and will leave in a day or two."

"But why speak of waiting a month before they can be taken, when thirst and starvation



AT THAT MOMENT THE CRACK OF A RIFLE BROKE THE STILLNESS AND THE MAN, WORRELL, FELL FORWARD.—Page 225.

will bring them to terms in a couple of days at the most?"

"It will, eh?" said Worrell, contemptuously. "There is a spring of water in one corner of the cavern, and they have enough provisions stored there to last all of a month."

"How came the provisions in that place?"

"I took them there myself, for I have used the cave many a time."

This was a falsehood, so far as the water and food were concerned, the cavern containing nothing of the kind.

"Do not any of these Iroquois know where the place is?"

"Of course not, and there is no danger of the Mohawk finding it under two or three days' hunt."

"You need n't tell me such stuff as that," said Captain Bagley. "There's nothing that you can hide from him."

"This is a pretty crowd that is afraid to go forward because there happens to be a single Indian somewhere in the woods. If you want to stay behind, let me have the warriors, and I will take them to the spot, and deliver the three into

the hands of Colonel Butler inside of an hour. What do you say to that?"

"You are so determined, you may lead on, and we'll follow."

"Well, let's do it, then, without any more—"

At that instant, the crack of a rifle broke the stillness, and the man Worrell threw up his hand and fell forward on his face, dead!

## CHAPTER XXX.

### A MERITED FATE.

THE amazement of Ned Clinton was no greater than that of Captain Bagley and the Indians over the sudden death of Worrell. For one moment the comrades of the deceased stood transfixed, staring at the inanimate form stretched on the ground before them. Then the Iroquois gave out their war whoop, and sprang to the cover of the nearest undergrowth. This brought them much nearer the youth than was pleasant. The thought struck him that these warriors would believe the one who fired the fatal shot was near by, and begin a search which must result in revealing Clinton himself. The precautionary action of the redmen served to recall Captain Bagley to his own situation, and he raised his gaze from the prostrate figure, and looked affrightedly around him.

"It was that Mohawk who fired that shot!" he exclaimed, making a hurried rush for the

same cover that was sheltering the half dozen Iroquois.

As fate would have it, he crouched down in the undergrowth so close to Ned Clinton that the latter believed discovery was inevitable. He was well hidden, however, and flattened out until it seemed he must force himself into the ground, while he feared if the Tory escaped seeing him, he would learn of his presence from the throbbing of his heart. But there was one thing in favor of the youth. The shot—by whomsoever fired—had come from exactly the opposite direction, a fact which was perceptible to the Iroquois themselves even if unnoticed by the young man at the time.

Perfect stillness succeeded the report, and when some ten minutes passed, the warriors appeared to suspect their inaction would permit the daring Mohawk to escape, when there was a chance to secure his scalp. At the end of the time mentioned, Ned, from his concealment, caught a glimpse of two warriors stealing along the edge of the open space. Their backs were toward him, thus showing they were pursuing an opposite direction in quest of the one who had slain their leader. Shortly after he detected others,

and last of all went Captain Bagley himself, he having changed from a leader to a follower. Thus in a brief time Ned found himself alone, with no one in sight excepting the inanimate form, now stark and stiff, telling its impressive story of a miscreant cut down in the middle of his wicked career.

"I wonder whether it was Lena-Wingo who did that," mused the youth, raising his head and peering through the undergrowth at the form. "Captain Bagley believed so, and I guess he was right, for I can't think of any one else who would do it."

After what had taken place, Ned was in doubt as to what his own course should be. From the conversation which he overheard between Worrell and Bagley, he knew that none of the survivors was aware of the location of the cavern, so that the fugitives might stay within it in safety. The youth concluded he had seen enough to carry back to his friends. He, therefore, cautiously retreated from the hiding-place, not wishing to encounter any of the Indians, who could be at no great distance, and desirous, too, of avoiding another sight of the dead man. It took but a short time to reach the tree, where he had first

seen the one who had attempted to betray them, and who had come near succeeding, too, in the effort.

"I don't know that anything is to be gained by staying here, and I will go back to where I left Jo and Rosa, and tell them they may take refuge in the cavern without any danger or disturb—"

At that instant he heard a stealthy movement behind him, and he was in dread of a collision with some of the Iroquois, who seemed to be almost everywhere in the forest and on the mountain. As he wheeled about, there was the redman, painted and with gun in his grasp; but it was the redman whom, of all others, he was anxious to see, being no other than Lena-Wingo, the scout.

"Thank the Lord!" was the fervent exclamation of the youth, as he rushed toward the Mohawk and caught his hand. "Where have you been so long?"

Lena-Wingo took the proffered hand and shook it warmly, for he held the youth in the highest estimation, as he had shown on more than one occasion. At the same time, he put on his usual broad grin, and replied, in his broken way:

"Lena-Wingo been watching you. Seen you hide in bushes when Iroquois come, and he watch."

"That was you, then, who picked off Worrell?"

"Who Worrell?" demanded the Mohawk, sharply.

"Why, that chap that was shot while talking to Captain Bagley."

"His name not Worrell," said Lena-Wingo. "He Dick Evans."

"No!" gasped Ned, in return.

"That he—Lena-Wingo look good while for him—found him—shoot him—won't kill any more women and babies."

And who was Dick Evans, that the mention of his name should cause so much emotion on the part of those who heard it pronounced? He was one of the most infamous wretches produced by the Revolutionary war. He had been heard of in Wyoming valley for years before the invasion of the Tories and Indians, and was looked upon as an outlaw who was compelled to live in the woods to escape the penalty of his innumerable crimes against civilization. There was no deed too dark for him to perpetrate. When the Revolution broke out he turned against the

land that gave him birth, and committed atrocities that no other Tory or Indian had exceeded. It was well known that he had slain women and children in more than one instance, and when he held the power no one expected mercy at his hands. He was one of the most wicked of beings and more than deserved the death which came to him with the bullet aimed and fired by the Mohawk.

The latter had declared to more than one person that he would shoot him like a dog at the first opportunity. With the defiant nature of his race, he sent the man himself word by a Seneca Indian that he was looking for him, and intended to keep it up until able to draw a bead on him. Evans sent word back in reply, that he was also looking for the Mohawk, and dared him to shoot him if he could. The only palliating characteristic of the despicable wretch was his bravery, and he really did do his utmost to gain a shot at the Indian who had threatened him. But he engaged in a game in which his antagonist was his superior, and had paid the penalty.

The body was left where it fell, for another of the peculiarities of Lena-Wingo was that, for

a number of years, he had refused to take the scalp of his fallen foe. At the time the Mohawk shot Evans, he suspected he was leading the party in search of the fugitives in the mountain; but the scout was so far removed from the two men while they were talking, that he failed to gain the import of their words. He therefore knew nothing of the scheme which had been so skillfully laid for entrapping the three whites. When Ned came to tell him the story, the Indian was astonished. He had not dreamt of any such thing, for he supposed that his friends would await him where he told them to stay and not suffer themselves to be persuaded to disobey him. He showed that he was displeased, but he said little, and the feeling was not deep. Ned Clinton generously assumed all the blame himself, and, like the lightning-rod, it did not take him long to draw the lightning from the wrathful cloud, so that all became serene again.

## CHAPTER XXXI.

### THE MOHAWK EXPLAINS.

When Ned had told Lena-Wingo all, and succeeded in restoring him to good humor, he attempted to draw from the Indian an idea of what he had been doing since he left them. But the youth did not gain much satisfactory information. The interview lasted but a short time, when Lena-Wingo proposed that they should return to their friends, who must be quite anxious over their continued absence. He added, also, that they could not but be hungry—a want which he took particular pains to satisfy. On the way to where the brother and sister had been left, the Mohawk turned off to the right, and drew from beneath a fallen tree two goodly sized loaves of bread and fully ten pounds of well-cooked meat.

"Where in the name of the seven wonders did you get that?" asked Ned.

"Lena-Wingo make bread and cook meat," grinned the redskin.

"Come, now, that won't do," laughed his young friend. "You might have cooked a piece of meat, but you never baked a loaf of bread in your life. You have been making a call upon some of the folks in the valley."

"No—not that—Tory call on settler—Tory make bread—then go to sleep—then Lena-Wingo call on Tory—go 'way—take bread."

That told the whole story. The Mohawk had made a raid upon some of the thieves in the valley who had robbed some of the patriots only to be spoiled in turn. Such being the fact, the food could not but taste all the better to the fugitives, who were in sore need of nourishment.

The fact that several Iroquois were on the hunt for Lena-Wingo appeared to cause that individual no concern. He walked forward as unconcernedly as if there were no such things as war and hostile men of his own race. He agreed with Ned that it was safe to occupy the cavern while they were compelled to hide, and until he could complete his arrangements for guiding Rosa into Wilkesbarre. It was prudent to keep her out of their sight while the Tories and Indians were making diligent

search for her, and the way was not clear to run the gauntlet. The Iroquois being new-comers, it was hardly possible that any of them knew the location of the cave which had been occupied by the whites.

The conversation which Ned overheard between Bagley and Evans confirmed this supposition.

As they journeyed, Lena-Wingo gradually divulged what he had been at during the afternoon, and why it was he had been absent so much longer than he intended. The scout had been into Wilkesbarre!

Before attempting to conduct Rosa thither he wished to reconnoitre the ground, and was more successful than he expected. Stealing up close to the rude fortifications, he managed to make himself recognized, and secured admission without any of his enemies suspecting the daring act. Had he been accompanied by Rosa at this time, he could have conducted her safely within; but he established an understanding with the inmates, so as to feel sure that when the time came to make the effort, he would run no risk of being injured by his friends, or of having his entrance dangerously delayed when he should claim admittance. In leaving the

town, the Mohawk was observed by several Iroquois, and became engaged with them, but escaped with his usual good fortune.

Lena-Wingo had no more than finished his narration when the cavern was reached, and they paused a moment or two to examine it. The Mohawk entered, and as he came back reported that it was as when he last saw it, adding that no place existed in the neighborhood which would serve as well for a real hiding-place for the young lady while her friends were preparing for the entry into Wilkesbarre. Taking this as his starting point again, Ned Clinton had no difficulty in finding the spot where he had bid good-bye to Jo and his sister. By the time the place was fairly identified, the two came forward and greeted him and the Mohawk.

The meeting was pleasant to all, for there was something in the presence of the famous and skillful scout that filled the three with confidence and hope. When he revealed the provisions he brought, there was some merriment, increased by the narration that Ned gave as to the manner in which it had been secured. The last food the fugitives ate was on the night preceding, so that all were in the condition to appreciate

his thoughtful kindness. When the noonday meal was finished they had made a goodly-sized reduction of the supply. The sensation of the occasion came afterward, when Ned told how Evans had met his end at the hands of the Mohawk, after completing his arrangements to capture the sleeping fugitives in the cavern.

Jo and his sister shuddered at the thought that they had been so nearly in the hands of the fearful scourge of the valley, and it was hard to understand why he spared them as they slept. The remembrance that the three had actually allowed themselves to become unconscious while he mounted guard over them, made all tremble as though the danger was not yet passed. Rosa and Jo expected that the Mohawk would be angered when he learned how his wishes had been disregarded, but Ned had already succeeded in calming his impatience. The event could not but be a lesson to all, since it was that disregard which came so near defeating the whole plan of procedure. None of the friends made any reference to it, nor did Lena-Wingo, but there came a resolve which took a deep hold of the hearts of the three that hereafter, while in the woods, the instructions of the Mohawk should be fol-

lowed to the letter, even though the threatened consequences were death itself.

The provisions which were left were carefully gathered up and carried to the cavern, which it was agreed should remain their headquarters. It was near midday, the sun only having slightly crossed the meridian. The weather was so warm that all were glad of the chance to spend an hour or two in doing nothing. Near by was a small stream of clear, cool, gushing water, from which they slaked their thirst, while they sat down beneath a large tree, to listen to the plan the Mohawk had decided upon. This he explained briefly, for the scheme was simple and easily comprehended, it being nothing more than to wait where they were until he could find the easiest way by which to enter Wilkesbarre.

The establishment of an understanding with the garrison was a necessary step, in which he had been fortunate. It had been his aim to do this also without discovery, and, had he succeeded, he would have conducted the entire party around to the opposite side, and run safely into shelter with them before sunset. The Iroquois having detected him as he was coming out, the difficulty of the return was greatly increased.

But for the fact, also, that Captain Bagley had learned from Evans before his death that the young lady was concealed in the woods, Lena-Wingo was confident he could have made the warriors believe he had delivered her there, and thus greatly simplified the real task of doing so.

## CHAPTER XXXII.

### THE FATAL TREE.

LENA-WINGO'S plan was to learn how large a force was on their side of the river, how they were disposed, and what was the precise scheme of the Tory colonel for the capture of the girl. When this was done, he could decide in a very few minutes on the course to circumvent him. Now that his friends were all together again, and were scarcely likely to be molested for some time to come, there was no occasion so favorable as the present in which to perform this duty.

Accordingly he told them he should start within half an hour, and would probably be gone the whole afternoon, for he meant to make his work so thorough that there would be nothing remaining to be done after his return except to enter Wilkesbarre that night, and most probably in the early portion of the evening. Could he succeed, the campaign would be ended and our story also; for once safely within the fortifications, the persecuted girl would be beyond all further trou-

ble or molestation from the Tory leader, whose name must forever remain one of execration when mentioned with that of Wyoming valley. Butler had not enough men to venture across the river and attack Wilkesbarre by force, as there was a goodly number still in his rear, who were sure to rise the instant the opportunity were given, and avenge the atrocious massacre of neighbors and friends. The only hope that he had was to secure the girl while attempting to reach this place of safety, and there could be no doubt he would strain every nerve to do so.

The Mohawk told his friends that if they went to sleep in the evening they must expect to be awakened by him, and must therefore be prepared. He advised Rosa to spend the most of her time in the cavern, as no place was more comfortable, and certainly none so safe. While there, her friends should keep watch through the surrounding woods, for there was a possibility of a visit from some of the Iroquois who might wander into the section. A little care, therefore, would be like the ounce of prevention, and might avert some serious difficulty.

The fugitives promised that his suggestions should be considered in the light of positive com-

mands. And then, as Lena-Wingo arose to go, he paused a minute or two while he explained a little secret about the cavern which he believed was unknown to everybody except himself. This was, that there was another means of ingress and egress to it, the ancient occupants of the same having probably constructed a means of escape in case their enemies should press them too hard. This consisted of a narrow underground tunnel, running from the couch where Rosa had obtained her brief rest, and rising to the surface beneath a broad flat stone, near a mass of dense undergrowth. The entrance to it from the interior of the cavern was covered in the same manner, and it is hardly likely that Evans himself was aware of its existence. The stone that hid the mouth at either end of the tunnel was so thin that a man could lift it with a slight effort, and, no doubt, at some time or other they had answered a good purpose.

Jo and Ned were delighted with this discovery, and were confident that, if a company of Iroquois should swoop down upon them, they could keep them at bay until nightfall, and then steal out without discovery. Nothing more remained for Lena-Wingo to say; and, as he was a man of

few words, he vanished almost immediately into the forest.

"I don't apprehend that there is danger of our disregarding the wishes of Lena-Wingo this time," said Ned, with a laugh, when they found themselves alone.

"No, I'll be hanged if there is!" replied Jo. "We have done that once or twice, and it has always got us into trouble where he had to help us out again."

"I supposed that he would be angry when we spoke about it," remarked Rosa, "but he showed no feeling at all."

"I understand how that came about," added Jo, with a significant look toward his friend. "Ned has made him believe it was all his fault, and Lena-Wingo has poured out his wrath upon his head, so that none was left for us."

"Is that true?" asked Rosa, looking into the face of her admirer, who blushed and tried to turn the conversation.

As there was no escaping the accusation, Ned had to take a scolding from Rosa herself, who loved him none the less for this little act of self-abnegation.

"See here!" exclaimed the victim. "One of the suggestions of Lena-Wingo was that Jo and I should keep a lookout while the day lasted, so that none of the big Indians might steal down here and eat up Rosa right before our eyes. What do you say, Jo?"

"That's what Red Jack told us," responded his friend, "and if he said it, why, that insured its being a wise suggestion. I'm ready, and while we're gone, Rosa ought to withdraw into the cavern."

"So I think."

It was she herself who made this last remark. As she did so she sprang up, pulled the stone aside, and whisked within, disappearing from sight like a fairy, pausing only long enough at the entrance to wave a light adieu with her snow-white hand. Left to themselves once more, the youths walked slowly away from the cavern, for they had a wish that, if seen, their location might not suggest in the most remote manner, the whereabouts of Rosa Minturn.

"I don't suppose there's much we can do," said Jo, as they halted near the spot where Ned Clinton had left the brother and sister. "You might go over the same route that you followed

when you were looking for the Mohawk, as you have made yourself familiar with it."

"That strikes me as a good plan," replied Ned; "there can be no telling how long I'll be gone, as it will depend upon what I see, but if I can discover nothing you may look for me back at the end of an hour or so."

"All right," said Jo. "There's no hurry about it; come when you get ready, and I'll do the same."

And in this off-hand manner the young scouts separated, neither dreaming that danger threatened. Ned followed the course indicated, now well known to him. It was only a brief walk to the tree, and there he paused awhile.

"I was fortunate enough to make a discovery when I climbed that tree this morning," he reflected, "and I may succeed in doing something of the kind if I try it again. But I would rather fail, for I don't want to see another Tory or Indian until Lena-Wingo comes back to us, ready to lead the way into Wilkesbarre. But if there's any one there, I ought to know it, so I'll take another look from the tree-top."

He leaned his rifle against the trunk, and was about to make an upward leap, for the sake of

grasping the lowermost limb when he saw a hand suddenly thrust from behind the tree, and his weapon was whisked out of sight like a flash. Before he could recover from his amazement he was surrounded by a half dozen Iroquois warriors and made prisoner!

## CHAPTER XXXIII.

### CAPTIVE AND CAPTORS.

THE capture of Clinton by the six Iroquois was done as artistically as if the whole thing were a play in which all had studied and rehearsed their parts. The youth had not the least suspicion of the peril, until he saw the hand suddenly extended and the rifle withdrawn at the same moment he leaned it against the tree trunk. Then, before he was able to form an idea of what it meant, the Indians came out, he was surrounded and all escape cut off. His gun was beyond his reach, and, wherever he turned, he was confronted by a painted and fully armed Indian warrior.

Ned was confident that these were the same ones he had seen under the command of Captain Bagley, and he looked around for that officer. But he was not to be seen. It was a small matter, however, whether they were the same redmen or not. It was not to be expected that there was any perceptible difference between the Iroquois—let them come from whatever part of the country they chose.

The warriors seemed to enjoy the consternation depicted on the face of their prisoner, who was speechless for a minute or so. But Ned was brave, and there was no shrinking when he was called upon to face one of the possibilities of the warfare in which he was engaged. The first really strong emotion of which he was sensible was that of astonishment, as he recalled the events of the past few days, during which he had met with so many narrow escapes, both from death and capture. Now he had fallen a victim just like a lamb when driven into a corner by the slayer. The next matter which agitated him was the question whether the Iroquois would kill him then and there, or whether they meant to preserve him for future punishment and torture. It must have been that they had received instructions from higher authorities that the whites, whenever possible, were to be taken prisoners instead of being shot, for they made no demonstration toward the fugitive in their power.

After the first feeling of amazement passed, and the captors and captured seemed to understand the situation more fully, the Iroquois stood for several minutes in a conversation which seemed to Ned to consist mainly of excla-

mations and gestures. He concluded they were discussing what was best to do with him. As he was unable to catch the meaning of a single word uttered, he busied himself in trying to read their sentiments through the gestures in which they indulged. This was a hard task, for they were not of a character natural and expressive to him. But when the thing had lasted some time, he caught the name of Lena-Wingo pronounced by one of them. This led the youth to suspect they were discussing some other question, having determined what was to be done with him long before.

It might be that the warriors were arguing the question whether they should attempt to reach the cavern, seeing that they had secured one of the fugitives, who could conduct them direct to the spot. But, in case such was their intention, Ned was resolved that he would die before playing the part of guide and thus be the means of delivering Rosa into the hands of Colonel Butler. If they addressed him, even, in broken English, he could feign an ignorance of what they said; and, if it should prove impossible to carry out that artifice, he would simply refuse to lead them, and they could do their worst. Fortunately,

however, he was not subjected to the trial. The conversation lasted but a short time, when the Indians seemed to conclude it wise for them to leave the immediate neighborhood, for Lena-Wingo was abroad, and there was no telling when or where he would strike, nor in what manner he would call on them.

"I suppose they're on their way to camp," thought Ned, following as obediently as a child, "and I am likely to meet the great Colonel Butler. I know what he thinks of me, and he won't be apt to adopt me as a brother."

The mind of the young man was very active, and he indulged in all kinds of speculation as he moved toward his unknown destination. He was well aware that the Tory commander held him in especial hatred, for the reason that he knew that he loved Rosa Minturn, and suspected that she loved him in return. Surrounded by such heartless allies as were the Iroquois, a cruel man like the Tory could readily find the means of doing what he willed in the way of punishing a rival in the affections of a lady. After indulging in these reflections until he wearied, the prisoner found himself wondering as to how long it would be before the Mohawk

would find out what had befallen his young friend.

"I think he will conclude to give me up," muttered Ned, "for whenever he goes off to look after the interests of Rosa, he comes back and finds the rest of us have gotten into trouble. It would have been a great deal better if he had left Jo and me at home, for we have been of little help. He may be gone till long after dark, and when he returns it will be too late for him to devote any attention to me, even if he has the inclination to do so. As for Jo," continued Ned, following out his train of thought, "it may be a long time ere he suspects what has befallen me; I didn't set any fixed time when I would return, and may stay away as long as Lena-Wingo himself before he will dream anything has happened."

His thoughts were called from these speculations by the party having him in charge. They came to a halt, and acted as if they had discovered something of an alarming character. Several warriors darted to cover, as if in quest of something in the undergrowth, while the others stood listening and peering into the woods about them. It was natural that Ned

should suspect the presence of Lena-Wingo when he saw this, and his heart beat high with the hope of some rescue organized by that scout, who was so fertile in all the expedients of the war-path. Had he reflected, he would have known that if the Mohawk had attempted any such thing, he would have managed it in such a way that the Iroquois would not have discovered it so readily. The halt lasted but a few minutes, when the warriors who had gone into cover so suddenly reappeared, a few words were exchanged, and the march was resumed.

"I'd like to know what all that was for," thought Ned. "We have come quite a distance," he added, looking up and about him, "and we ought to be very near the camp of Colonel Butler by this time."

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